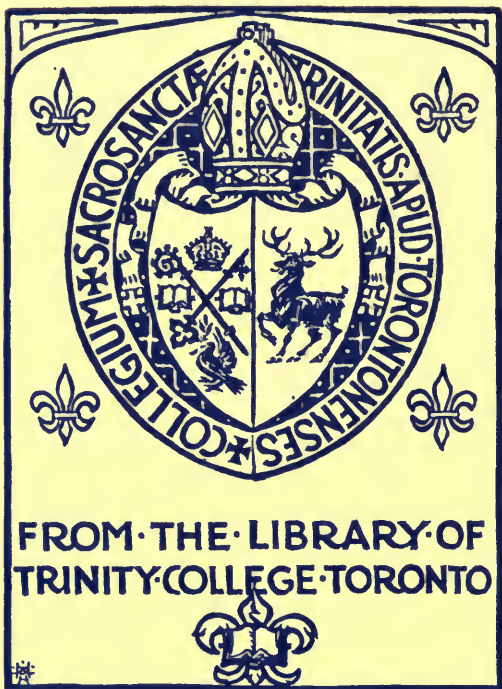


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AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE PRINCIPLES  
OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

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AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE PRINCIPLES  
OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY;  
OR, REASONS  
FOR RECALLING MY SUBSCRIPTION  
TO THE ROYAL SUPREMACY.

BY THE REV. R. I. WILBERFORCE, M.A.

“Non habent Dei caritatem, qui Ecclesiæ non diligunt unitatem.”—S. AUG.

LONDON:  
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

1854.

JUN 19 1968

## PREFACE.

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THE preparation of the present volume has brought to a head difficulties, by which I have been perplexed for four years. Some may think me dilatory, and others hasty; but the mind, like the body, has its time of crisis, which it is not altogether in our own power to regulate. Those who know what it is to break through the associations of nearly half a century, will not wonder at my experiencing that which Cicero speaks of in a less arduous case: "*Quam difficile est sensum in republicâ deponere.*" I had previously felt that the Royal Supremacy "in all Spiritual things and causes," as modified by recent Acts of Parliament, was open to great objection; but I did not at that time discern how completely it was the introduction of this novel principle, which had originally separated England from the communion of the rest of Christendom; and, therefore, that every subsequent generation (and I myself in particular,) by subscribing "readily and willingly," as the terms run, had in effect given an individual sanction to the events of the sixteenth century. So soon as my conscience was satisfied that the declaration, to which I had pledged



myself, was unlawful, I felt that it was a duty to recal my assent as solemnly as it had been given. I had already communicated my intention to my curates, and to a few friends, when I was induced to pause by the rumour that a prosecution would immediately be commenced against my work on the Holy Eucharist, and by the assurance that a complaint had been made against it to the Archbishop. I was unwilling that my resignation should be misunderstood by the Public; and to obtain a decision respecting the doctrine of the Real Presence seemed so desirable, that I thought it justified some slight delay in withdrawing from a position, which in any case I was resolved to abandon.

Week, however, passed by after week; my convictions became more decided; while I received no intimation that any step of a legal nature was taken against me. Moreover, as the present work was now completed, I considered that it would be unfair to those who sympathized with me in regard to the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, not to disclose to them what a wide gulf separated me from another avowed principle of the Church of England. If a trial had come on, and had terminated, as I thought likely, in my favour, I should have compromised those who had declared their concurrence with me, by abandoning my position in the moment of success. I sent my manuscript, therefore, (on which I had been engaged since the end of February) to the Press, and on the day when the first proof was returned to me, I addressed the following letter to the Archbishop:—

“Burton Agnes, Aug. 30, 1854.

“MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—The step which I now take would have been taken somewhat sooner, but for the rumours that my work on the Holy Eucharist would be made the subject of legal investigation. I find it difficult to believe that the intention is seriously entertained; for the warmest opponents of that work deny Baptismal Regeneration, the Priestly Commission, and the Validity of Absolution. Now, these doctrines are so positively affirmed in the Formularies of our Church, that for one passage in them which presents difficulties on my system, there are an hundred by which that of my opponents is plainly contradicted. I can hardly imagine that they desire a rigour in the interpretation of our Formularies, which must be fatal to themselves. But I should have felt it due, both to my opinions, and to those who shared them, to defend myself to the utmost against such an assault.

“My book, however, has now been nearly a year and four months before the Public, and no legal proceedings, so far as I know, have been commenced. And, in the meantime, my attention has been drawn to another part of our Church's system, with which I have become painfully conscious that I can no longer concur. I refer to the Royal Supremacy. I am as ready as any one to allow her Majesty to be supreme over all persons, and in all temporal causes, within her dominions, and I shall always render her, I trust, a loyal obedience. But that she or any other temporal ruler is supreme ‘in all spiritual things or causes,’ I can no longer admit. If the Act of 1832 were all on which my difficulties were founded, I might justify myself, as I have heretofore done, by the consideration, that it was probably passed through inadvertence, and had received no formal sanction from the Church. But my present objection extends to the act of 1533, by which this power was bestowed upon the King in Chancery, and to the first article in the 36th Canon, which is founded upon it. With the grounds of my objection, I need not trouble your Grace; though I shall shortly state them to the Public through the Press. To your Grace, however, I desire to state, that I recal my subscription to the 1st Article in the 36th Canon, as believing it to be contrary to the law of God. It remains, of course, that I should offer to divest myself of the trusts and preferments of which this subscription was a condition, and put myself, so far as it is possible, into the condition of a mere lay member of the Church. I, therefore, tender my resignation to your Grace.

“I remain,

“My Lord Archbishop,

“Your Grace's obedient servant,

“R. I. WILBERFORCE.

“To his Grace the Lord Archbishop of York.”

The following is the reply of the Archbishop:—

“Bishophthorpe, York, August 31, 1854.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot affect to be at all surprised at the contents of your letter just received. It is not necessary for me now to enter upon a discussion of the questions alluded to in your letter. But, as far as by law I may, I accept of your resignation of the preferments you hold in the diocese of York.

“You are aware, however, that in order to give full legal effect to your intentions, a formal resignation should be made before myself in person, or before a notary public.

“With every feeling of personal respect and esteem,

“I remain, my dear Sir,

“Your faithful servant,

“T. EBOR.

“The Rev. R. I. Wilberforce.”

A few days afterwards, and before my resignation was made public, it was stated in the Newspapers, that His Grace had determined to commence proceedings against me. As my resignation was not executed, nor the necessary papers prepared, I wrote as follows to His Grace: it will be seen by his answer, that the statements alluded to, had been made without his sanction.

“Burton Agnes, Sept. 5, 1854.

“MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—I have this morning been informed that it was stated in the *Yorkshire Gazette* of last Saturday, that your Grace had at length determined to commence legal proceedings against me for my book on the Holy Eucharist.

“Your Grace will perceive that my letter of August 30th was based upon the supposition that no such proceeding was determined upon. May I ask, therefore, if the paragraph in the *Yorkshire Gazette* is correct; since if your Grace desires to try the question, I am willing to delay the legal execution of my resignation for that purpose.

“I remain,

“Your Grace’s obedient servant,

“R. I. WILBERFORCE.

“His Grace the Lord Archbishop of York.”

“Bishopthorpe, York, Sept. 6, 1854.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I saw in the *Yorkshire Gazette* the paragraph to which your letter of this morning alludes. By whom, or at whose suggestion that paragraph was inserted, I have no knowledge whatever, any more than you have.

“On the receipt of your resignation, dated August 30, I gave orders to discontinue all further inquiry on the subject of the ‘complaint’ which had been laid before me. To that I adhere, as well as to my acceptance of your resignation.

“I am, my dear Sir,

“Your faithful servant,

“T. EBOR.

“The Rev. R. I. Wilberforce.”

Whether I was right in considering that I ought not to carry the present volume through the Press, without first relieving myself from the obligations of subscription, I leave to the reader’s judgment; I can only say that my resolution was not taken without counting the cost. For if these pages should find their way into any fair parsonage, where everything within and without speaks of comfort and peace, where sympathizing neighbours present an object to the affections, and the bell from an adjoining ancient Tower invites the inmates morning and evening to consecrate each successive day to God’s service; and if the reader’s thoughts suggest to him that it is impossible to unloose ties so binding, or to transplant himself from his ancient seat, when he is too old to take root in a new soil, let him be assured that such also have been the feelings of the writer. And more painful still, is the consciousness that such a step must rend the hearts and cloud the prospects of those who are as dear to men as their own souls. It is at such times that the promises of Scripture come home to the heart with a

freshness, which eighteen centuries have not diminished. "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life."



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AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE PRINCIPLES  
OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

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CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

CHURCH-Authority and Private Judgment—the determinations of the collective body, and the supremacy of individual conscience—have long contested the religious obedience of mankind. And the controversy seems to increase as civil governments contract their sphere of operation, and allow larger scope to individual will. For with an increased opportunity of judging for themselves, comes an increased need of such principles as may enable men to judge rightly. I set down the thoughts, then, which reading and reflection suggest to my own mind, with a view rather to inquire than to teach, and that I may feel more confidence in the conclusions to which these guidances conduct me. Increasing years admonish me that it is time to sum up my results, before the decay of the body affects the mind; that I may have something by which I may be prepared to abide in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment. I write, therefore, under a solemn sense of the shortness of time and the reality of eternity, and after earnest and continued prayer to God that I might rather be withdrawn from this scene of trial, than either adopt or encourage that which is at variance with His Holy Will.

Now that a paramount authority was possessed by Our Lord Himself, and that He committed the like to His Holy

Apostles, is admitted probably by all Christians. The question in dispute is, whether any such powers outlasted their times; whether they founded any institution, or appointed any succession of men, to which the office of judging in matters of faith was entrusted in perpetuity. Before considering what can be said on this subject, it will be well to ask, what was meant in those days by the Church, what were understood to be its characteristic features, and the origin of its powers. For there are two leading views respecting the nature of the Church; and according as men take the one or the other view of the nature of the Church, they will commonly adopt a corresponding hypothesis respecting its authority.

Was the Church, then, a mere congeries of individuals, gathered together, indeed, according to God's will, but not possessing any collective character, except that which is derived from the conglomeration of its parts; or was it an institution, composed indeed of men, but possessed of a being, and action, which was irrespective of the will of its individual members, and was impressed upon it by some higher authority? This, in fact, is to ask whether it had any inherent life, and organic existence. By a wall is meant a certain arrangement of bricks, which, when united, are nothing more than bricks still; but a tree is not merely a congeries of ligneous particles, but implies the presence of a certain principle of life, which combines them into a collective whole. Such a principle we recognize, when we speak of an *organic* body. Our thoughts are immediately carried on to one of those collections of particles, which Almighty God has united according to that mysterious law, which we call life. Thus is an impulse perpetuated, which having its origin from the Author of nature, displays its fecundating power in all the various combinations of the vegetable kingdom. Its sphere, indeed, is inert matter, and the continual assimilation of fresh portions of matter is necessary to its prolongation; but its *being* is derived from a higher source; it is the introduction of a living power into the material creation.

The notion entertained of the Church, then, would be

entirely different, according as it was supposed to be merely a combination of individuals, or an *organic* institution, endowed with a divine life. In the first case it would have no other powers than those which it derived from its members; in the second, its members would be only the materials, which it would fashion and combine through its own inherent life. In one case it would stand on human authority; in the other, on Divine appointment. On one side would be reason, enlightened it may be, but still the reason of individuals; on the other, supernatural grace.

Now there can be no doubt which of these views is favoured by Scripture; whether we look to its express words, to the general tendency of prophecy, or to the analogy of doctrine. The word *Ecclesia*, indeed, by us rendered Church, is used for any combination of men: but of that particular combination, which Our Lord established, we have a specific definition, wherein it is declared to be "the Body" of Christ. This definition, repeatedly<sup>1</sup> given, implies certainly that the Church is not a mere combination of individuals, but possesses an *organic life* from union with its Head. No doubt it has been affirmed to be merely a figurative expression, founded upon the use of certain analogous words. But it is the only definition we have of the Church; it is a definition frequently given; and if we are at liberty to get rid of such scriptural statements by saying that they are figurative, the use of Scripture as a guide to our belief is at an end. Besides, the word which St. Paul employed could not have been understood by his readers in a figurative sense, because it has no such meaning in the Greek<sup>2</sup> language. The English reader is so familiar with the

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 23. Coloss. i. 18, 24.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek expressions for a whole, consisting of many persons, are συνέδριον, σύλλογος, συναρχία, ἱταίρια, κοινωνία, φρατρία. Polybius uses σύνθημα. A number of soldiers is λόχος, ἑίλη, ὄμιλος. The associations on which these words are founded, depend chiefly on the idea of *collecting*. σῶμα is never thus used. In Latin also, where the word *corpus* is sometimes applied to a *body of soldiers*, collegium, concilium, conventus, consessus, catus, cohors, manus, agmen, societas, are the common words for a body of persons. The modern use of the word *corporation* came in through the ecclesiastical Latin of the middle ages. "Multiplex est Corporatio; spiritualis, quæ constat ex personis religiosis," &c. (Duncane.) It rather confirms this argument, that σωματεῖον occurs in a somewhat

application of the words *body* and *head*, to those who are merely related together as members of the same community, that he not unnaturally supposes St. Paul's expressions to be founded upon a similar idiom. But in Greek such an usage was wholly unknown : the word *σῶμα* (body) was never used for a society composed of different persons ; nor *κεφαλὴ* (head) for its chief. And though there are a few expressions of the sort in Latin, yet the prevalent use of the words, *body*, *corporation*, *corps*, &c. in modern languages, appears to be founded upon the analogy which St. Paul suggested, and which has since given shape to the languages of Christendom. So that to assert St. Paul's words to be figurative, because the terms have gained this force in later times, is to mistake an effect for a cause. To cross the Rubicon has been a figurative phrase since the time of Cæsar ; are we to suppose, then, that the Rubicon was not *really* crossed by Cæsar himself ?

Again : When we turn from individual expressions to the general course of prophecy, we find its whole scope and tendency to be built on some real identification of the great Renewer of man's race, with the race which He was to renew. The prophecies of Isaiah associate the new system which was to prevail in the world with the Rod, which was to "come forth out of the stem of Jesse : " and Daniel beheld that stone, which was "cut out without hands," that is, the Incarnate Nature of the Son of God, expand itself into a mountain, which was to fill the earth. And this exactly accords with what is revealed to us respecting the purposes of Our Lord's Incarnation. For was not Godhead and Manhood combined in Him, that the inferior nature, which was exalted in its Head, might be communicated to His brethren ? "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." To resolve St. Paul's assertions, therefore, into a figure of speech, is not only to

analogous sense in the late Greek of the Pandects. But German, being a more primitive language, has resisted this tendency. Luther translates *body* by *leib*, as Ulphilas had rendered it by *leik*. And both translate literally the word *σῶσωμα*, *imbodied*, "*mit einverleibet*," Luther. *Galeikans*, Ulphilas. But *leib* is not used in German for a body of men, any more than *σῶμα* in Greek : for this the old word is *zunft* (*zusammenkunft*) or *gemeine*, *gesellschaft*, &c.

violate the analogy of language, but to detract from the mystery of our redemption. The Apostle surely was well aware how wonderful was the truth which he was communicating, when he affirmed Christians to be "members of" Christ's "Body, from His Flesh, and from His Bones;" for he himself declared it to be "a great mystery." There can be no pretence, therefore, for refusing to take his statements in that natural and obvious sense which his words imply. He declares the Church to be that which Our Lord had Himself predicted it should be, an *organic* body, deriving its life from perpetual union with the Humanity of its Head. "I am the vine; ye are the branches." As the whole race of mankind inherits that life which was infused into nature in Adam, so the Church's life results from that power which was bestowed upon humanity, through the taking it into God. The mystical Body of Christ has an organic life, like His Body natural; for Christ was personally Incarnate in that Body which was slain, but by power and presence will He be Incarnate in His Church till the end of the world. As the Gospels are the record of His Presence in the one, so is Church History that of His Presence in the other. What else could be intended by His promise to His chosen representatives? "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Or what less could be implied in that scriptural statement which identifies His members with Himself? "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ."

The Scriptural statements, then, respecting the Church of Christ, represent it to be an organic body, whereby that life which had entered into humanity through the Head of our race was extended to its members. And so St. Irenæus speaks of those "who are not nourished at the breast of their mother," the Church, as "not discerning that clear fountain, which flows from the Body of Christ."<sup>3</sup> And on this principle depends the whole idea of the Christian Sacraments, as the media of Church union, and the gift which the Church was commissioned to convey. Holy Baptism was instituted

<sup>3</sup> iii. 24, 1.



that "by one Spirit" we may "all be baptized into one body:" and the Holy Eucharist transmits that life, which had its source in God, and which was imparted to mankind through the Mediator. "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." Those who do not recognize this *organic* action in the Church of Christ, must find a large part of St. Paul's language unintelligible. What can be meant by the being "buried" with Christ, and "raised up" with Him, by the "putting Him on," the being "found in Him," by our relation to "the New Man," by the position and work of the "last Adam?" These words surely look to some actual set of events as their counterpart. The notion of a mere sympathy of feeling, and accordance of purpose, are not enough to bear their weight. They cannot be got rid of as parabolical expressions, unless the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole mystery of the New Creation, is resolved into a fable. And, therefore, "we affirm that the sacred scriptures assert the whole Church of God to be the Body of Christ, endowed with life by the Son of God. Of this Body, which is to be regarded as a whole, the members are individual believers. For as the soul gives life and motion to the body, which of itself could have no living motion, so the Word giving a right motion and energy, moves the whole body, the Church, and each one of its members."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Origen. c. Celsum vi. 48. p. 670.



## CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH HATH AUTHORITY IN CONTROVERSIES  
OF FAITH.

THE word *Church*, then, is not merely a name which is bestowed upon those who associate for religious purposes : the Body, which it describes, has an organic life, and collective action. Its action depends upon *His* authority, of whom it is the Body ; its life is from union with its Head. “ Where Jesus Christ is,” says St. Ignatius, “ there is the Catholic Church.”<sup>1</sup> For it is “ the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” The question recurs, then, has this Body any authority, and if so, what authority, in the determination of doctrine ? Was it designed to teach, and were men intended to abide by its decisions ?

Now that the Church was intended to teach might be argued from antecedent probability. For its decisions in relation to the system of grace, fill the same place which the consent of mankind does in the kingdom of nature. The first are the utterances of the spiritual, the last of the natural man. And we know what weight is attached to the consent of mankind in all questions of morals. Individual judgments are felt to be insecure, if they are repugnant to that collective sense of right and wrong which God has implanted in our race. How, then, can we fail to defer to that body which not only expresses the public opinion of men, but is

<sup>1</sup> Ad Smyrn. 8.

endued with those supernatural gifts, with which our Incarnate Head has enriched humanity? But general probabilities of this kind are unsatisfactory: let us come to positive facts. Is there any direct evidence attainable, as to the Church's authority? Now that Our Lord should refer St. Peter to the Church's decision, as the mode of avoiding personal contentions, would plainly indicate that it possessed authority, provided we may assume, that in this passage (St. Matt. xvii. 17) He was speaking prophetically respecting the order of His future kingdom. And such an interpretation appears inevitable, both because St. Matthew might otherwise have been expected to indicate that the words did not refer to that which was understood by this name, when his Gospel was written; and also because the passage follows so immediately after the only other mention which Our Lord ever made of the Church—a mention which is plainly prophetic. How could the Apostle, to whom, two chapters before, Our Lord had spoken prophetically of the rock, on which He would build His Church, understand anything else by the tribunal to which he was here referred? Especially since this reference is accompanied by a renewal of that commission to bind and loose, which had been founded on the previous prophecy (v. 18.) Why should Our Lord have repeated these words, unless He had been referring to that institution which was to grow out of the Apostolic commission? He must have been speaking prophetically, therefore, of that society which received its completion through the gift of Pentecost. Its subsequent influence is explained by the holy Apostle, when he speaks of it as "the pillar and ground (or stay) of the truth;" and Christians receive an exhortation to "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God;" and to "follow" their "faith." And again: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." These surely are definite statements both that the Church is a witness to truth, and also that in matters of conscience its authorities have a claim to attention. And since truth is attained through the teaching of the Spirit, must not the Church,

being Christ's Body, be guided by that Spirit by which it is inhabited? St. Paul, therefore, represents the "unity of the faith"—the agreement, that is, in one true doctrine—to be the purpose for which the different classes of ministers, and the whole framework of the Church, has been ordained. And this he founds on the fact, that "there is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." And, therefore, he bids the Ephesians "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that, which every joint supplieth—maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love."

These words of St. Paul identify the perception of truth with inherence in that one Body of Christ which inherits the promises. And since his assertion is founded upon general considerations, and upon a reference to that Holy Spirit, which was to be the perpetual guide of God's people, his argument must be of universal application and abiding force. But, perhaps, it may be objected by some, that neither St. Paul's words, nor those of Our Lord, are so explicit as might be expected. They allege that statements which were designed to refer us to a guide, would be positive and direct; and that it is not enough to find incidental allusions to the Church's office. Such expectations at best are uncertain; because we cannot prescribe rules to the Divine wisdom. And in this case they imply a forgetfulness that Scripture did not precede the Church; but the Church preceded Scripture. Had Scripture been introducing the Church to notice, it might have done so in direct and explicit terms: but since the Church was in existence before the New Testament was given, it was natural to employ incidental expressions in alluding to a known and familiar object. The manner in which

the Church is referred to in Scripture is exactly what we might expect, considering that Scripture was not a set of credentials, by which the Apostolic College commended itself, but a legacy by which it instructed others.

Again: The opponents of Church authority are unreasonable in demanding more distinct Scriptural warrants; for what Scriptural warrant have they for that which they would substitute in the Church's place—the New Testament? In the New Testament itself we have no statement<sup>2</sup> either of its contents or its inspiration. The Scripture which is spoken of to Timothy is the Old Testament, in which he had been instructed; of the inspiration of the New we have no assertion in Holy Writ. Neither can it be shown respecting all its books that they were either written or sanctioned by individuals who possessed miraculous power. And were this otherwise, it would still require to be shown that these particular books, and every part of them, partook of the inspiration of their authors. For the claim to inspiration cannot extend to every word which was ever spoken or written by an Apostle. It must surely be limited to those things which concerned religion, or in which doctrine was expressed. We need some one, then, to assure us that those Apostolic writings which have been preserved, partake of this character, and are to be received as a record of eternal truth. And to what can we refer for such guidance, but to the Church, by which the Sacred Books were admitted into the Canon of Scripture, and commended to the belief of her members?

For this reason it is that to quote Scripture in behalf of the Church's authority is in a certain degree to argue in a circle; for how can we accept the inspiration of Scripture, save on the authority of the Church? But if this be so, why are Scriptural proofs of the Church's authority adduced at all, as they have been, in the present chapter? The answer is twofold: 1st. We may quote Scripture in proof of the

<sup>2</sup> II Peter, iii. 16, has been spoken of, as though it were such a statement. But 1st. there is no list given of St. Paul's Epistles, neither were they at that time collected: 2ndly. the received Greek Text does not refer the words, "*in which*" to St. Paul's Epistles, but to the "*things*" spoken of; it is *ἐν αὐτῇς*, not *ἐν αὐτῶν*: 3rdly. the passage could not have guided men in framing the Canon, because this Epistle was itself one of the last received.

Church's authority, by employing it merely as an ancient record, and independently of its claims as the inspired volume; 2ndly. It has weight as an *argumentum ad hominem*, with those by whom its inspiration is admitted.

1st. The basis of our belief is the mission of Our Blessed Lord and of His Apostles. Respecting this mission our informant is human testimony.<sup>3</sup> The statements of the Apostles and Evangelists form the first link in the chain of evidence. Independently of that claim to attention which their writings possess, through that Divine inspiration, of which the Church assures us, they have weight as early documents. For why should we not quote St. Matthew or St. Paul, as well as St. Irenæus or Tertullian, when we are inquiring into the nature of an institution which they saw, and with which they were connected?

2ndly. There may be those who admit the inspiration of Scripture without perceiving its dependence on the authority of the Church. Since their conclusion is correct, though their premises are fallacious, we may employ that which they know, as a means of instructing them in that which they do not know. Though to prove Church authority on Scriptural testimony, is seen to be insufficient by those who discern that the inspiration of Scripture rests on the authority of the Church, yet it may be a means of instructing those by whom this relation is not appreciated. Fuller information, indeed, will show them that the Church came first and Scripture afterwards: so that Scripture could not be originally employed for the establishment of that on which it was itself dependent. This will be found rather to confirm than derogate from the authority of the sacred volume; for inspiration belongs not to books, but to their authors; and no system of verbal inspiration has been devised, which will stand the test of philosophical inquiry. Yet it must be admitted that the words of Scripture, by showing the accordance and harmony

<sup>3</sup> It may also be argued that individuals acquire the same instinctive reverence to the Church, to which they are accustomed to defer, which children have to their parents. And any arguments which tend to show such a feeling to be illogical, would equally prove that children were not bound to honour their parents until the fact of their relationship could be demonstrated to them by argument.



of the Divine communications, confirm the authority by which they were themselves established.

The direct proof, however, of the Church's authority must not be made to depend upon the inspiration of those Scriptural books which we believe to be inspired on the authority of the Church, but upon a reference to the persons by whom the Church was founded. We have proof of the authority of the Holy Apostles, and know that they were guided by the Holy Ghost. These facts we have on the same evidence which assures us of their existence. We wish to know further whether their power was merely personal, or whether it was perpetuated in that institution which they established. While they lived, the Church spoke through their mouths authoritatively: could it do so after their departure? When they assembled at Jerusalem they declared what "seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us;" and they silenced objectors by reference to the Divine authority of the system which they administered. "What, came the word of God out from you? or came it to you only?" And again: "We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God." But was the Church empowered to act in the same manner afterwards? This we must learn by observing, 1st. what was the belief of the Apostles themselves, who could not be mistaken on this subject; and in what position they left their converts: and 2ndly. how this matter was understood by the early Church, at the time when its inspired guides were withdrawn, and before it could be supposed to have deviated from their instructions.

I. The point in dispute is whether the promise of a supernatural guidance had been made to the Apostles individually, or to the Apostles as the heads of a permanent society; whether they had received the gift of divine direction as single servants of Christ, or as a corporation which had continuance. Both notions have been entertained. Now surely the conduct of the Apostles, before their departure, must have indicated which belief they themselves entertained. It was clear that disputes would arise, when they were gone, respecting the meaning of truths which they had taught. We have no knowledge whether they were aware themselves



to what extent this would reach. It was revealed, indeed, that "perilous times shall come;" but probably the Apostles themselves would have been astonished, had they forecast the subtleties of the Arian heresy, and known the blasphemies which were to be uttered against their Master. Such things were possible, however, because such things fell out; now supposing such a contingency to have been suggested to the Apostles, how would they have said that it was to be met; on what principle did they suppose that the Gospel Revelation was to be interpreted? No doubt they taught men to make reverent use of Holy Scripture. Our Lord approved the conduct of the Jews, because "ye search the Scriptures, and in them ye think ye have eternal life;" and He censured those who set up human traditions against the inspired rules of the Old Testament. The Bereans, again, were praised because they searched the Scriptures for the prophecies concerning Christ; and St. Paul speaks of Scripture as "profitable for doctrine," and able to make men "wise unto salvation." These passages show the respect which was due even to the Old Testament; and they might be adduced against any one who set up the Church in opposition to Scripture, and alleged that she might dispense with its use, and supersede its authority. But such a case has never arisen, and probably will never arise; the practical question which really arises, is not whether the testimony of Scripture is important, but which of various contending parties has a right to claim it as on his side. Now how did the Apostles suppose that such a question as this was to be decided? Did they abandon the matter to the will of individuals, or did they leave any authorized exponent of their words? Did they think their Gospel so clear that no well-intentioned inquirer could fail to master it, or did they imagine that the Holy Ghost, whose office was to guide men into truth, had provided any means through which His gracious work was to be effected? It is sometimes said that if the Apostles had designed men in after times to refer to any living authority, they would have stated their intentions in more express words. But we cannot infer anything from their silence in this particular, because we have no account how far their vision of the future prospects

of the Church extended. They may have been allowed a Pisgah view of the manner in which it was to take possession of the inheritance of the Gentiles, without discerning that it was to give a shape to the new races which were to occupy Europe, or to come into collision with the civilization of modern times. St. Paul's statement respecting the man of sin, and St. John's vision, were specific revelations; and how far they themselves understood all the relations of what was to come, is not disclosed. So that we have no right to conclude that they would have stated everything which was likely to be useful in future times, or that they knew what was the exact nature of all questions which would arise. All which we could expect from them is such direction respecting the future, as corresponds with their mode of treating present affairs. St. Paul instructed the Galatians and Corinthians on the particular points on which they wanted information. When the Hebrew Christians were excluded from the Temple, they were exhorted not to forget their own assemblies, and were reminded of the perpetual Sacrifice of the Christian Church. The Epistles contain no such prospective provision for a future state of things as we find in Our Lord's discourses, especially in those which are recorded by St. John. For the views of the Apostles, as we know by their conduct in regard to the admission of the Gentiles, were enlarged by successive communications; but knowledge and grace dwelt without limit in their Master. The statements, then, which have been quoted, are just such as the Apostles were likely to make. Their declaration that the Church is the "pillar and ground of the truth," and their order to Christians to "obey them that have the rule over you," are all which we could calculate on finding, because these supply a rule for the existing times, and for immediate employment. The only question was, whether this rule was meant to outlast the period of their own lives, or to be limited by it. Did they give it, like the moral dicta, by which it is accompanied, as a principle which circumstances made it needful to mention, but which when mentioned was of perpetual force? For if it was of force for a month after their removal, why not for a century? There is no event,

except the removal of the Apostles by death, whereby the age of St. Paul can be discriminated from the age of St. Ignatius. Unless the directions of St. Paul were suspended by his death, they must have continued in force under his successors. And if the Church was possessed of a specific commission, when St. Ignatius taught at Antioch, why not when St. Chrysostom taught there at the end of three centuries? So that if the authority of the Christian Society continued at all after the departure of the Apostles, there was no reason why it should ever cease: if the Holy Ghost remained with it as its guiding principle for a year, the same Spirit might be expected to abide with it for ever.

Now which of these views is to be gathered from the conduct of the Apostles? The point is not one about which they can be supposed to have had no opinion, for they were fully informed respecting the existing state of the Church, and knew wherein lay its seat of government. And had their belief been that the supernatural guidance of the Church was to cease with themselves, they would naturally have provided for the settlement of all immediate difficulties before their removal. They would have seen that the new Society was left in such a state of completeness as to require no fresh legislation. But if it was a permanent society, possessing sufficient resources in that divine guidance which was conferred upon it through the presence of the Informing Spirit, nothing would be needed but a new succession of officers, to perpetuate those functions which had hitherto been carried on by Apostles. We find, then, in fact, that this last was the exact point attended to; while in respect to the former there were important omissions. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and the works of St. Clement, St. Ignatius, and St. Irenæus, show the Apostles to have provided a succession of rulers, on whom was to devolve the government of the Church after themselves. But they left many matters of practice unsettled. What could be of greater moment than to determine whether Jewish Christians ought to obey the Mosaic law? The Council of Jerusalem, by exempting Gentiles from its observance, had tacitly sanctioned its re-

tention by Jews—a principle on which St. Paul<sup>4</sup> himself had acted. Was this system to continue always, and if not, by what authority was it to be superseded? Again: The observance of Easter led to great practical difficulties, for the Quartodecimans of Asia could plead St. John's example, while the rest of the Church had learnt our present rule from St. Peter and St. Paul. And questions of the utmost difficulty speedily arose respecting the readmission of the lapsed.

Unless the Apostles had believed that the Church was possessed of a permanent organization, and that the Holy Ghost would continue to guide it, when they were themselves removed, they might have been expected to have made some express provision for all such cases. But there were two points, of especial moment, which they could hardly have omitted—they would surely have determined what was the Baptismal Creed, and what the Canon of Scripture. Whereas there is no trace that they made any provision for this purpose, or fixed by authority what was to become the basis of belief for following times. Certain main Articles of Faith are indeed referred to in the Epistles, and when we approach the end of the second century,<sup>5</sup> we find them put together in a manner resembling a Formulary of Faith; but their compilation appears to have been the work of the Post-Apostolic Church. To guard those points on which there was danger of error, seems at each period to have been the office of the Church. Again: The settlement of the Canon of Scripture depends upon the authority of the Church, not on that of the Apostles. The last words<sup>6</sup> of the Apocalypse have sometimes been referred to, as though applicable to Scripture as a whole: but the volume of the New Testament was not put together till after this book was written; its own authority was long and widely disputed; and though at present printed as the last, it was not the last written book of Scripture. Had the Apostles imagined that their own removal would leave the Church destitute of that Divine guidance,

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxi. 24, 25.

<sup>5</sup> St. Iren. iii. 4, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Of course the principle, which these words imply, may be applied to the other books of Scripture, so soon as their inspiration has been demonstrated.

which was to lead it into all truth, they could hardly have left the settlement of the Inspired Canon to its discrimination. Compare with this the conduct of Moses before his death. Not only did he assemble all Israel, and repeat his laws with the solemnity of a death-bed injunction, but he delivered them to the Levites in writing, he ordered the "book of the law" to be "put in the side of the ark of the covenant" "for a witness;" and he gave directions likewise, that so soon as the promised land had been attained, a public record of them should be made in the most durable materials.<sup>7</sup> Again: When Our Lord Himself was withdrawn from the sight of His disciples, He not only gave them information during forty days respecting the mysteries of His coming kingdom, but He left them the promise of the Holy Ghost, and directed them to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem, till" they were "endued with power from on high." How came the Apostles to make no such provision, unless they supposed that the Holy Ghost would be a guide to the Church, as it had been to themselves? They would otherwise surely have made it clear to their disciples, in what written documents was to be found the code of the new Society.

A recent writer has stated, but not removed this difficulty. "It was very important that the Church should receive an assurance concerning the *number* of the Books of Scripture; St. John was the fittest person to give *that*; and no place so fit for it as the Apocalypse." And again: "It was very necessary that the Church should know that the Canon of the Scripture of the New Testament is composed of the writings of seven persons, and sealed by the eighth."<sup>8</sup> No doubt, unless the Church herself were supposed to be as adequate for this function as her Apostolical founders, such a precaution would have been absolutely "*necessary*" for her security. But how does Dr. Wordsworth's suggestion mend the matter? He considers such a list to have been supplied by the vision of the twenty-four elders, and by the seven thunders which were heard by St. John. But how could this be a guide to the Church, since, even allowing the in-

<sup>7</sup> Deut. v. 1; xxxi. 24-6; xxvii. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Wordsworth on the Revelation, p. 123, 235.



terpretation to be just, the vision was never understood till Dr. Wordsworth explained it? The difficulty remains, therefore, as he has stated it; unless the Church herself were a competent judge respecting the Canon of Scripture, and this she could not be, unless the gift which dwelt in the Apostles had been continued to the Society which they founded, it was "*necessary*"<sup>9</sup> that she should have received such a statement from the holy Apostles. How could they have omitted so obvious a service had they supposed it to be required? It is plain, then, that they must have supposed the community which they had founded to be replete with the same gift which had enlightened themselves; so that they secured the authority of Scripture, by providing for the perpetuity of that institution to which it was committed. These great lights of the Church went out one by one, but no sudden darkness overspread the hemisphere, because the true "light which lighteth every man" was still present by His Spirit in the world. One generation passeth away and another cometh, but the Church abideth for ever.

Turn now from the conduct of the Apostles, to the position of their disciples. Imagine the case of a person who was disposed to enter the Christian Church towards the end of the first century. Suppose him living in the West, where no Apostle was to be found, though St. John still survived in Asia. The seeds of Gnostic error were already sown, so that he might fall in with false advisers, and find it matter of dispute what was the genuine Gospel. What course ought he to take in order to guard against delusion? Should he trust to his private study of the documents which the Apostles had left, or should he avail himself of the guidance of any living instructors? Suppose him to do the latter, and he would find that there existed a Society in all parts of the

<sup>9</sup> How much the need of such a confirmation as this by the last surviving Apostle is felt to be required by those who deny the Church's authority, we may see by the use made of the report, mentioned by Eusebius, that St. John had seen the other three Gospels, and approved what was done, but thought they wanted additions. The story rests on no very early authority; it is adduced as an answer to the objection that the Evangelists are not accordant, and seems to have been suggested, as it is no doubt countenanced, by a comparison of the Gospels themselves.—*Eus.* iii. 24.

Roman Empire, which held together as one man, possessed one single form of faith, one accordant discipline, one common worship, and that the Apostles had made provision for its perpetuating their system, by committing its government to their chosen disciples. He would find that this Society not only claimed to represent the Apostles, but, moreover, that it professed itself to have gifts to bestow, which could not be attained except through its concurrence—the which gifts it refused to give, except to those who submitted themselves implicitly to its decision. He might learn further, that in this Society there still remained one of Our Lord's Apostles, although his great age, and his distant residence, made personal resort to him difficult.

Such considerations would seem to justify an inquirer in submitting himself without opposition to the decision of the Church. But suppose him possessed with a strong feeling of the necessity of exercising his individual judgment, and resolved to estimate for himself how far the Church was faithful to the doctrine of its founder. There may have been those already who had that intense jealousy of a priesthood which is prevalent in the present day, and who were ready to suspect that the corruptions of the Church began, as is often alleged, even under the Apostles. In this case the ordinary appeal is from the judgment of the Church to the text of Scripture. Now the Apostles must no doubt have written letters on ordinary subjects, with which such an inquirer might possibly meet. Ought he to receive these as inspired? and if not, why should he attach that character to St. Paul's letters to Philemon, Timothy, and Titus? This question would surely need an authoritative answer; and where could he look for an answer save to the Church? Nor would the difficulty be less, if he confined himself to the Gospels. St. John's Gospel we may suppose either not to have been yet written, or not to be known; and that of St. Matthew, even if it was translated into Greek by himself, as is not improbable, would not find its way very early into the West. For it was confessedly written in their own language for his countrymen in Palestine. There remain, then, the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke. But why

should such an inquirer as we suppose, accept their authority? Nothing is more common than to meet with those who profess deference for the Apostles, because they could prove their inspiration by their miracles, but who make it a point of conscience to reject any inferior authority, and to exercise their own unbiassed judgment on the words of Inspiration. But St. Mark and St. Luke were not Apostles; neither of them are known to have wrought miracles; and those, therefore, who were inclined to reject the authority of the Church, because it might misrepresent the Apostles, would be equally ready to reject these Evangelists, because they might misrepresent Our Lord. On what, then, does the authority of these Gospels stand, save on the judgment of the Church, by which they have been admitted into the Canon of Scripture? Had we evidence, indeed, that they were written during the lifetime of St. Peter and St. Paul, we might rest them, perhaps, upon the individual authority of these two Apostles: but the same testimony, which connects them with the teaching of St. Peter and St. Paul, implies them to have been written without the co-operation of these Apostles, if not after their death.<sup>10</sup> What inference, then, could be drawn, but that though

<sup>10</sup> St. Irenæus, probably the best authority on the subject, when mentioning that the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke were grounded on the teaching of St. Peter and St. Paul, adds, that they were written "after their departure." *μετὰ τούτων ἔχοντες*. iii. i. 1. Papias says, "Mark having been Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately whatever he could remember. Not that he expressed in order what Christ had spoken or done. For he had not heard Our Lord, nor been His follower, but had attended on Peter, who used to teach as occasion arose, but made no arrangement of Our Lord's words. So that Mark was not to blame for writing some things as he remembered them. For he had but one object, to omit nothing which he had heard, and to report nothing erroneously."—*Eus.* iii. 39. St. Clement of Alexandria's account is: "When Peter had publicly preached the word at Rome, and proclaimed the Gospel by the Spirit, his numerous hearers urged Mark, as having been long his follower, and remembering what was spoken, to write down what he had said. On this St. Mark composed the Gospel, and gave it to those who asked him. Of which circumstance, when St. Peter was apprized, he neither prohibited, nor encouraged it."—*Eus.* vi. 14. Eusebius gives a somewhat different account of St. Clement's testimony in another place. Having mentioned the cause of St. Mark's writing, he goes on: "They say that the Apostle having known what was done by the revelation of the Spirit, was pleased with the man's zeal, and sanctioned the book for reading in the Churches."—ii. 15. This is somewhat at variance with the former statement, and would rather imply that the book was written when St. Peter was at a distance. Else why this

Revelation was a specific gift, committed by Our Lord to certain chosen followers, yet that the community which they had founded had its gift also? So that it was the Church's office to decide between what was human, and what was divine, and to interpret the system, of which it was the depository. And how could this be effected, save through the continued indwelling of that Divine Guide, "who spake by the Prophets?"

II. This statement is confirmed, if we turn to the history of the early Church, and see how it met those difficulties, to which it was exposed by the departure of its inspired leaders. Take first those writers who had been contemporary with the Apostles, and whom they left in charge of their institutions. All of them assumed that the Church, through her authorized functionaries, was the appointed expositor of the faith, which was to be sought at her mouth, and not by private deduction

mode of information? Other ancient writers, such as Tertullian, identify the doctrine of these two Evangelists with that taught by St. Peter and St. Paul, but say nothing of any authority given to their expressions. A passage, indeed, is quoted by Lardner from St. Augustin (*Credibility*, p. 2, c. cxvii. 6) which represents the Apostles and the Church as co-ordinate judges in respect to these two Gospels: "Mark and Luke wrote at a time, when their writings might be approved, not only by the Church, but also by the Apostles still living."—(*De Consensu Evang.* iv. 9.) But St. Augustin, as the context shows, is not speaking of any sanction given to the *expressions* of these two Evangelists, nor does he at all imply that their Gospels were seen or approved by St. Peter and St. Paul. He is merely arguing for the general accuracy of their statements and of those in the Acts, which no doubt is confirmed by the fact, that some of the Apostles were still alive. And elsewhere in the same treatise he affirms the Church to have a power of judging the question of canonicity by reference to the standard of dogmatic truth of which it was the depository. For after stating that these two Gospels were accepted, he adds, that the writings of some other persons were not "such that the Church had confidence in them, and admitted them to the canonical authority of sacred books; and that not only because the authors were not such as to command confidence, but also because their writings contained some fallacious statements, which the Catholic and Apostolic rule of faith and sound doctrine condemns."—*De Con. Evan.* i. 2. So that he claims for the Church authority to judge of the canonicity of books by the analogy of faith, independently of any consideration of their authors. How little the ancient Church supposed that it was necessary to have the authority of an Apostle in order to prove a book worthy of reception may be seen from the judgment of Dionysius the Great, of Alexandria, respecting the Revelation. He says he does not venture to "reject the book," nor does he deny its author the possession of "knowledge and prophecy," but affirms that he could not be the Apostle St. John.—*Eus.* vii. 25.



from the text of Scripture. This is implied in St. Ignatius's<sup>11</sup> oft-repeated statements of the necessity of yielding obedience to the Bishop. In his view it was the best security for maintaining the true doctrine of Our Lord's nature. In like manner does his follower, St. Polycarp, exhort men to be "subject to the Presbyters and Deacons as to God and to Christ."<sup>12</sup> And St. Clement writes to the discontented at Corinth: "You, who have laid the foundation of the dissension, be subject to the Presbyters, and be schooled to repentance. Bend the knees of your hearts and learn to be subject, putting off the proud and boastful confidence of your tongues. For it is better to be approved in the flock of Christ, though we are of small account, rather than being eminent to be cast out of His hope."<sup>13</sup>

But the belief of the age which followed the Apostles, is set before us more clearly when we come to the somewhat later, but more copious statements of St. Irenæus and of Tertullian. The third book of St. Irenæus, and the "*De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*" of Tertullian, oppose the authority of the existing Church, to the wantonness of private interpretation. "When there are such proofs," says St. Irenæus, after referring to the authority of Polycarp, and of his master, St. John, "we ought not to seek from others for that truth, which it is easy to obtain from the Church, inasmuch as the Apostles have deposited in it, as in a rich storehouse, everything which pertains to the truth; so that every one who will can take from it the draught of life."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Give heed to the Bishop, that God may give heed to you. My soul for their's who are subject to the Bishop, the Presbyters, the Deacons. And with them may it be my lot to hold in God."—*Ad Polyc.* 6. And again: "I exhort you to study to do everything in the unity of God: the Bishop presiding in the place of God, and the Presbytery in the place of the Synod of Apostles, and the Deacons, who are most dear to me, being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before all time, and was manifest in the end."—*Ad Magnes.* 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ad Philippens.* 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ad Corinth.* 57.

<sup>14</sup> He continues, "for this is the entrance to life; but all others are thieves and robbers. Wherefore, they ought to be avoided, while that which belongs to the Church we should love with all diligence, and lay hold of the tradition of truth. For what is it? Even if there were a dispute respecting any unimportant question, ought we not to recur to the most ancient Churches, which were wont to enjoy the converse of the Apostles, and to receive from them



Again he says, in reference to the Gnostics, "those who wish to see the truth may find the tradition of the Apostles manifested in the whole Church throughout all the world ; and we are able to number up those who were appointed by the Apostles to be Bishops in the Churches, and their successors to our day, none of whom either taught or knew anything of their dreams. For if the Apostles had known any hidden mysteries, which they had taught separately and secretly to the perfect, they would have delivered them to those more especially to whom they committed the Churches themselves. For very perfect and blameless in all respects did they wish those to be, whom they left as their successors, delivering to them their own place and authority ; whose good conduct, therefore, was of the utmost service, and whose fall would have been the greatest calamity. But because it takes too long in such a volume as this to enumerate the successions of all the Churches ; therefore, by stating the tradition of that Church, which is the greatest, most ancient, and best known of all—the Church I mean which was founded and constituted at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul—and by declaring the faith which it announces to mankind, and which comes through the successions of Bishops even to our days, we confound all those, who in whatever way, whether from self-conceit, vain-glory, or blindness and ill-judgment, separate themselves from the body."<sup>15</sup> The same mode of reasoning is used by Tertullian. "To the Scriptures, therefore, we must not appeal ; nor must we try the issue on points, on which the victory is either none, or doubtful, or as good as doubtful. For though the debate on the Scriptures should not so turn out, as to place each party on an equal footing, the order of things would require that this question should be first proposed, which is now the only one to be discussed, ' To whom belongeth the

what was certain and practically clear concerning the matter in dispute. For what if the Apostles had left us no Scriptures, ought we not to follow the course of the tradition, which they delivered to those to whom they entrusted the Churches ? This arrangement is followed by many barbarous nations, who being without ink and parchment, have their salvation written by the Spirit in their hearts, and guard diligently the old tradition."—iii. 4. 1, 2.

<sup>15</sup> iii. 3. 1, 2. Παρπαυάγειν was no doubt St. Irenæus's expression.

very Faith ; whose are the Scriptures ; by whom, and through whom, and when, and to whom was that rule delivered whereby men become Christians.' For wherever both the true Christian rule and Faith shall be shown to be, there will be the true Scriptures, the true expositions, and all the true Christian traditions."<sup>16</sup>

These passages show that the practical belief of Christians during the second century accorded with that system which was implied by the conduct of the Apostles. The Gospel was not maintained merely by logical deductions from Scripture, but men were referred to an existing authority, as indicating what was the new Revelation. This was not to derogate from the importance of Scripture or the authority of the Apostles ; for the meaning of Scripture, and the intention of the Apostles, were the very matters in dispute. The writers of that age did not assert, indeed, that the meaning of Scripture was so clear that it could not be disputed ; for the innumerable disputes which filled the world would have belied the assertion. But in asserting that it was the Church's especial office to guard and interpret Holy Scripture, they were borne out by the fact that the Sacred Books were one by one stamped as Canonical by its decision. This was to carry out a principle which had been sanctioned by the Apostles them-

<sup>16</sup> De Præscrip. Hær. 19. "If these things be so, so that the truth be adjudged to belong to us, as many *as walk according to this rule*, which the Churches have handed down from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God, the reasonableness of our proposition is manifest, which determineth that heretics are not to be allowed to enter upon an appeal to the Scriptures, whom, without the Scriptures, we prove to have no concern with the Scriptures. For if they be heretics, they cannot be Christians, in that they have not from Christ that name, which by following according to their own choosing they admit to belong to them, *i. e.* the name of heretics. Therefore, not being Christians, they can have no claim to Christian writings." And somewhat further : "One man altereth the Scriptures with his hand, another their meaning by his exposition. For though Valentinus seemeth to make use of the entire document, he doth not less lay hands upon the truth, though with more cunning skill than Marcion. For Marcion nakedly and openly useth the knife, not the pen, since he made havoc of the Scriptures to suit his own matter. But Valentinus spared them, because he did not invent Scriptures to fit his matter, but matter to fit the Scriptures : and yet he took away from, and added more, in taking away the proper meanings of each particular word, and in adding systems of things not to be found therein."—*Id.* 37, 38.

selves, who drew up no list of the Books of Scripture, but left this office for the Church under the guidance of her Divine Teacher. Nor was this the only office which they left to her. They left her also, as we have seen, to fix those important questions of discipline, which time and circumstances evolved. Yet the points so fixed were dealt with as though settled by the same authority which had been exercised by the Apostles themselves. For though those first followers of Our Lord had a special gift as the inspired oracles of the new Law, yet the Christian Israel was never to be deserted by its Divine Guide, till its desert journey was past and it had reached its heavenly country. The injunctions, therefore, which had been given by the Holy Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, at the Council of Jerusalem, were afterwards modified or abrogated by the Church, acting under the same authority. The observance of the Law of Moses, then left open to Christians of Jewish descent, was held unlawful, by the time of St. Augustin, for them also. The eating of blood,<sup>17</sup> previously prohibited, was at that time deemed lawful, according to the same Father. Again, the Quartodeciman usage respecting Easter, allowed till the Council of Nice, was subsequently forbidden under pain of excommunication. How could these changes have been made, unless those who inherited the position of the Apostles, had inherited likewise a measure of their powers? It follows that to be the inspired authors of the New Testament was peculiar to those to whom this function had been committed; but that to possess a Divine guidance for the interpretation of the Christian scheme was a continued attribute of the Church. This is proved as well by what was done by the Church as by what was left undone by the Apostles. For it had in it a still greater name than theirs; it had with it the Presence of Christ even to the end of time.

<sup>17</sup> Vid. St. Aus. c. Faust. Lib. xxxii. 13; and Lardner's Cred. p. 2. c. 44. 4.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY.

THE purpose of the last chapter was to show that the Church is possessed of authority. For she is spoken of by Our Lord as a Judge, which is to be referred to, and she is declared by St. Paul to be the "pillar and ground of the truth." And as such she acted at that critical period when she was deprived of her inspired founders. For the Christian of the second century could not lay his hand upon any book and say, "you will find here everything which it is necessary to believe," but he could point to a living Society by which everything essential was taught. True, the Church had by that time agreed which of those "many" parties who had "taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed," were to be received as inspired witnesses; and in different places were preserved the Epistles of those Apostles of Christ whose words were accepted like those of Christ<sup>1</sup> Himself. But no one could as yet say that he knew the whole of what was thus taught by the Apostles; that most important document, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which explains the relation of the New to the Old Covenant, was not generally received; and there were other works, such as the Epistles of St. Clement and St. Barnabas, which an uninstructed person would not easily have discriminated from the inspired books. For the first was read in the Church to which it was addressed, and the last may possibly

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. vi. 12.

be the work of an Apostle. Nor was there anything in these sacred writings which implied that they were meant to supersede that oral system which had been in existence before they were communicated. In the first written of them all apparently—those to the Thessalonians—St. Paul bids his hearers stand fast in “the traditions which ye have been taught, whether *by word* or our Epistle.” “The Gospel which” St. Paul “preached;”<sup>2</sup> and “that good thing which was committed unto” Timothy, was not a book, but “the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.” For St. Paul left no summary of his system, like that Book of the Law, which Moses enjoined that the future kings of Israel should copy out for their guidance; but he charged his successor to “commit to faithful men the things *heard* among many witnesses.” His Epistles to Timothy, indeed, were committed to writing because he was compelled to “tarry long,” whereas he had hoped to “come shortly;” and some of his most precious words would have been lost to us, as it seems, if he had not been “much hindered from coming to” Rome, or if he had fulfilled his intention, when he was “minded to come before unto” Corinth. He could not, therefore, have intended to supersede the office of that teaching body, which he recognized as an existing authority during his life, and which at his death he left in charge of his writings.

But supposing the Church possessed of authority, of what authority is it possessed? Now if it be her office to teach doctrine, to whom should this question be addressed but to herself? This is not to argue in a circle; for it is a natural and universal course, so soon as we are satisfied of the claims of an instructor, to ask an explanation of the principles on which he instructs. When Nicodemus sought Our Lord, he had first satisfied himself of the superior claims of the new Teacher; but by whom could he be instructed respecting His Divine character except by Himself? We have seen, in like manner, that the Church's authority is witnessed by the words and actions both of the first Christians, and of their inspired teachers; and, therefore, her own explanation of her office must be accepted by those who respect the witnesses by

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. xv. 1.



whom her claim has been attested. Now there are three especial points on which the nature of her office is dependent: 1st. on what principle does it stand; 2ndly. what is its extent; 3rdly, what its duration?

I. A clear understanding of the principle on which Church-authority stands is necessary to its just appreciation. It is needful to guard, for example, against the not unusual opinion, that it depends *merely* upon the accidental circumstance that the Primitive Church was less remote from the age of the Apostles than ourselves. No doubt this is a consideration of great importance; and it enables us, as was shown in the last chapter, to appeal to the writers of that period as witnesses of the Church's position on the removal of the Apostles. For who so likely to carry on the true line of doctrine and discipline, as those whom the Apostles had appointed to govern after them? Who better fitted to understand St. John than his disciple St. Ignatius? Who more sure to hand on the system of Polycarp, than St. Irenæus who had sat at his feet? But a further step is taken when those who witness to the fact, that the Church is possessed of authority, go on to explain the principles of that authority of which she is possessed. The office, indeed, of building up the Canon of Scripture, which was imposed upon the Church of the second century, leads, of necessity, to some higher view of its position and character. Did the sacred Scriptures consist only of ordinary writings, the ordinary rules of evidence would suffice for their support. It would be enough that the writings of Paul and John may be identified like those of Livy and Cicero. And, therefore, those who take a low view of the authority of the sacred writers, are easily satisfied of their authenticity. But in proportion as we esteem highly of their authority, we must assign a higher function to that Body, which not only had to fix their authorship, but to attest their inspiration. Had the Books of the New Testament, indeed, been exclusively Apostolic, there would have been some speciousness in the attempt to transfer the authority which sanctions them from the Church to her first founders; but it has been already observed, that our Canon contains books which are not the work of Apostles—two Gospels, the Acts, and possibly

the Epistle to the Hebrews—while an Epistle has been excluded from it which was anciently attributed to an Apostle. And the decision is known not to have turned on a bare inquiry into the external evidence of authenticity, but likewise on the conformity of the documents adduced with the analogy of faith.<sup>3</sup> So that we are led, of necessity, to that deeper view of Church-authority which the two preceding chapters suggested. They compel us to seek for it in those fundamental characteristics of the Gospel Covenant which are revealed in Holy Scripture, and are witnessed by the undoubted consent of the Catholic Church.

For Church-authority has its basis in the principle, that all wisdom comes from God, and that it is communicated to mankind only through the Incarnation of Christ. And, therefore, as it dwelt entirely in His Manhood when He was present in the Flesh, so its presence ever since is to be sought in that community “which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” The Presence which was to be found in His Body Natural, when He was upon earth, is to be sought, since His Ascension, in that Body Mystical, which is His perpetual medium of approach. For the gifts of grace, which had their dwelling in the one, are imparted through the other. And, therefore, Our Lord concluded that address to the Father with which He ended His earthly ministry, by setting forth the twofold presence of Himself and of the Blessed Spirit, by which the Church was to be sanctified and possessed. “I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” Inasmuch as the attributes of Deity pertain to the essence of Itself, therefore, the love, wherewith the Second Person in the Glorious Godhead is forever bound to the First, is no other than that Blessed Spirit who is the bond of the whole Trinity. So that in these words we are assured of that indwelling of the Holy Ghost whereby He animates the Body of Christ, while Our Blessed

<sup>3</sup> Vid. Eus. iii. 29, and vi. 12. The same rule is laid down in the Apostolical Constitutions, vi. 16. “You ought not to attend merely to the names of the Apostles, but to the nature of the things stated, and to the pure doctrine.” St. Jerome tells us that the authority of St. Jude’s Epistle was disputed in consequence of his reference to the Book of Enoch.—*De Scrip. Eccl.* 4.

Lord is present likewise Himself, through the power of His Godhead, and through His Flesh and Blood, which is bestowed in the Holy Eucharist. The Church's authority, therefore, is no accidental office with which she happens to be entrusted—it has its basis in the laws of her nature, and in the original constitution on which she was built; it flows directly from that life, which emanates from her Head, and cannot be dissociated from her existence. So that Our Lord set forth the principle and measure of her coherence by reference to the highest of all standards: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." And, therefore, do we read that "there is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body."

This principle was so fully recognized by the early writers, that they attribute all separation from the Body of Christ to the lack of Christian love. For since the Holy Ghost, who is the very principle of love, is the life of the whole Christian society, its dissolution and division into parts can result only from the withdrawal of this principle of coherence. This is the great truth inculcated in every part of St. Ignatius's Epistles. He identifies any lack of concord among Christians themselves with the loss of that Divine life which has its source in their Lord. So long as they obey that attraction which binds them to their Head, they must needs be attracted to one another. "Where division and anger is, God does not dwell. To all, therefore, who repent the Lord forgives, if they enter by repentance into the oneness of God."<sup>4</sup> So possessed is he of the oneness of that principle

<sup>4</sup> Ad Philadel. 8. "As Our Lord without the Father did nothing, being alone, either by Himself or by His Apostles, so neither do you do anything without the Bishops and the Presbytery. Do not aim at attaining things which may be specious to your individual minds. But let there be one prayer, one intercession, one mind, one hope, in love and blameless joy. *There is one Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is better.*"—Ad Magnes. 7. "Jesus Christ is praised by your unanimity and accordant love. Do you, therefore, all of you, make up one band, in symphony and concord, taking your direction from God in unity sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that He may hear you, and may recognize through whom you do well, being members of His Son. It is profitable for you, then, to continue in blameless love, that you may by all means partake of God."—Ad Ephes. 4.

which has its root in God, and diffuses itself as the impulse of life through Christ's mystical Body, that he identifies faith which apprehends the mysteries, with love which binds together the members of Our Lord. When speaking of persons who rejected the Holy Eucharist, he says, "Those who contradict the gift of God perish through their reasonings. But it had been better for them to love that they might share in the resurrection."<sup>5</sup>

To the same purpose is the assertion of St. Irenæus, that those who "separate themselves from the Christian body," do so "from self-conceit, vain-glory, blindness, or ill-judgment."<sup>6</sup> The like conviction respecting the moral guilt of division is expressed by all the writers of the second century—St. Ignatius,<sup>7</sup> Hermas, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria—as it was also by their successors. Neither ought their conduct to be attributed to a narrow jealousy, or to any wish to institute a spiritual monopoly, which might restrict the religious privileges of mankind. The point aimed at, was not to impose a restraint, which might limit the gifts of grace, but to secure the unity, which might preserve them. Its cause was a deep conviction of the reality of that Divine system which had been committed to human hands, and could only be maintained through the permanence of the Society through which it was communicated. Hence St. Cyprian's well-known statement: "he cannot have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his Mother. If any one could escape, who was out of Noah's Ark, then he who shall have been out of the Church can escape also."<sup>8</sup> He explains his principle, when stating the grounds on which he denied the validity of

<sup>5</sup> Ad Smyrn. 7.

<sup>6</sup> iii. 3. 2. He speaks of those "who make divisions" as wanting in the love of God, and considering their own interest, not the unity of the Church. For on account of small and contemptible causes, they rend and divide the great and glorious Body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, destroy it. Peace is in their words, but their acts are those of war: they truly strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. No benefit which such men can confer is a counterpoise for the mischief of division."—iv. 33. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Passages on the subject from all these writers are collected by Röhre *Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 589-594.

<sup>8</sup> De Unitate, p. 181. [*Paris*, 1666.]

heretical baptism;<sup>9</sup> he identifies the life of the Christian community with the agency of that Blessed Spirit, who takes up His dwelling in Christ's Mystical Body. And so, too, St. Augustin,<sup>10</sup> who though not asserting the invalidity of lay-baptism, yet affirms as strongly as St. Cyprian, that forgiveness can only be obtained through the Church, because Her life is that gift of the Spirit, which she ministers to individuals.

The principle, then, of Church-authority, as understood by the ancient writers, is that the mystical Body of Christ is an organized whole, inhabited and guided by the Holy Ghost, who by dwelling in it gives it life, and infuses charity and concord among its members. So that the interpretation of doctrine and custody of truth is no separate and accidental office, with which it is entrusted, but a function of its life, and a consequence of its being. "We guard the faith, which we have received from the Church, and which proceeds perpetually from the Holy Spirit, as though it were some precious deposit, in an excellent vessel, which can renew itself, and can make new the vessel which contains it. For this is the office committed to the Church of God, that it should, as it were, breathe inspiration into His creatures, so that all its members should receive the gift and live. And here lies the principle of our communication with Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruption; here is the confirmation of our

<sup>9</sup> "It is the Church alone, which being spiritually joined and united to Christ, bears children, as the Apostle says, 'Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the washing of water.' If, therefore, this is the beloved one, and the spouse, which alone is sanctified by Christ, and alone is cleansed by His laver, it follows that heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, can neither be cleansed nor sanctified by His laver, and cannot bring forth children to God."—*Epis.* lxxiv. 6. [*Goldhorn*, 1838.]

<sup>10</sup> *In* the Church "sins are remitted, inasmuch as out of her there is no remission. For she herself has received the Holy Spirit as a peculiar pledge, without which no sins are remitted."—*Enchiridion*, lxxv. Again: "That it is in the Catholic Church alone, by the imposition of hands, that the Holy Ghost is given, was understood by our fathers to be expressed by the Apostle's words, 'since the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.' For love is the very gift which they do not possess, who have been cut off from the communion of the Catholic Church. They cannot have the love of God, who do not love the unity of the Church, and by this circumstance the Holy Spirit may be rightly understood not to be received except in the Catholic Church."—*De Bapt. C. Don.* iii. 21.



faith, and the ladder, whereby we ascend to God. For in the Church, St. Paul says, God has placed Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, and all the rest of that system whereby the Spirit operates, of which Spirit they are not partakers who do not betake themselves to the Church, but defraud themselves of life by ill-thinking and worse deeds. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God, there is the Church, and all grace; and the Spirit is truth. Therefore, those who do not participate in it, are neither nourished to life from the breast of their mother, nor do they taste of that purest fountain which proceeds from the Body of Christ.”<sup>11</sup> So does St. Cyprian speak of the Church, which “having its Lord’s light diffused through it, extends its beams throughout the whole world;”<sup>12</sup> and Origen says, that “the Church enlightened by the light of Christ, is herself also made the light of the world.”<sup>13</sup>

II. The principle of Church-authority, then, was not supposed to rest upon that mere accident of propinquity, which belonged to the first age, but to arise out of that fundamental law of Christ’s Church, whereby its life depends upon the presence of the Informing Spirit of God. “By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one Body.” As St. Augustin explains it: “He who ought to unite us into a body is one Spirit.”<sup>14</sup> And this leads us to the next point. What is the *extent* of Church-authority? Does it refer to all subjects, or is it limited in its sphere of operation; is it a final rule, or does it admit of appeal to some higher tribunal?

Since Revelation was bestowed, and the Church appointed, to teach us our faith, it has always been supposed that questions which do not belong to the faith, are out of their province. Those things, therefore, of which sense informs us, with all their deductions, relations, and circumstances, belong to another region of knowledge. The Holy Ghost has been given to the Church to enable her to judge not about matters of fact, but matters of doctrine. But it appears to be doubted often, whether her authority extends to *all* matters of doctrine. There are those who say, “the Church is no doubt

<sup>11</sup> S. Iren. iii. 24, 1.

<sup>13</sup> In Gen. Hom. i. 6.

<sup>12</sup> De Unitate. p. 181.

<sup>14</sup> Ad Donat. post Coll. 58.

entitled to respectful and deferential attention, so long as she agrees with Holy Scripture, but if she goes against the Word of God, it is impossible to accept her statements. We ought 'to obey God rather than man.' This, of course, is indubitable: but does it mean that men ought to abandon the Church, if she professedly abandons the Scriptures; or does it mean that men ought to reject such statements or orders of the Church as may seem to them at variance with the Scripture? If it means the first, it may be replied, that the Church never *has* professed to abandon the Scriptures, and that if we believe Our Lord's promise, we may be sure she never *will* make such profession. But if it means the second, the question at once arises, who is to decide whether the Church's order or statement is, indeed, at variance with Holy Scripture or no? For the points in dispute are commonly those in which some peculiar interpretation is put upon a passage, on the authority of the Church, to which the words themselves might not have conducted men. Some promise of Our Lord, or some allusion of His Apostles, is supposed to refer to a practice or doctrine of the Church, which it does not clearly teach. Thus, the sixth chapter of St. John receives its interpretation from the institution of the Holy Eucharist; and Our Lord's statement that He came to "give His life a ransom instead of many," is explained by the Sacrifice on the Cross. The question always is, then, is the Church right in interpreting, as she does, the promise or allusion? To say that she is, so long as her interpretation is not forced or constrained, is only to evade the question, for by whom is this last point to be decided? It may be replied, perhaps, that in ordinary cases it may be right to take her opinion, but that some things are so clear and momentous that upon them men cannot give up their convictions, by whatever authority they may be overborne. On these points, therefore, it may be said, that men must ultimately judge for themselves, subject, of course, to that responsibility which attaches to all decisions on matters so important, and respecting which they will soon have to render their account before the unerring tribunal of Almighty God.

Now, what is this but to affirm, in fact, that the Church is

a sufficient authority in easy cases, but that in difficult ones there lies an appeal from her judgment to that of each individual? For unless her decision is accepted as final, we may take her *testimony*, as we should that of common report, but the sole *authority* is with the individual mind. *Authority* in all instances belongs to those by whom judgment is finally pronounced on the last appeal. And it is assumed that this must be done by private reason. Now, unless persons set up a claim to immediate inspiration, they can hardly pretend that their private reason is in all cases influenced by the Spirit of God. Indeed, considering the variety of private judgments, a man who maintained that he himself was the favoured possessor of such a privilege, would only render himself ridiculous. So that the private interpretation of Scripture must mean its interpretation by each man's own reason; and indeed its defence is usually grounded on its furnishing an obvious and *common-sense* explanation of the Divine words. Now, if this be contrasted with the judgment of the Church, the difference is, that the latter does not profess to be guided by *common* sense, or *human* reason, but to obey the teaching of that Divine Spirit, by which she is guided in the interpretation of God's will. The argument, then, which is alleged for private judgment is plainly misapplied: that "we ought to obey God rather than man," is a reason for accepting, and not rejecting, the Church's decision. Its determination may seem strange, harsh, and unexpected to human reason, but the very ground for taking it is, that the Body, by which it is given, is inhabited and directed by the Holy Ghost; whereas, private judgment is ultimately nothing but the exercise of that human reason, of which each child of Adam is the possessor. So that private judgment is avowedly only the reason of man, while the Divine Spirit is professedly the guide of that Society in which He abides. And, therefore, to allow an appeal from the explanation of the Church to that of individuals, is in reality to subordinate grace to reason, and God to man.

Since the Church, then, is an organized Society, and its life is derived from that presence of the Holy Ghost, by which the whole Mystical Body of Christ is inhabited, it is

plain that her authority in controversies of faith cannot be limited. To say that her authority extends to all subjects, and is final in each, is only to say that God is wiser than man. Can it be admitted that in easy questions we are to refer to God's Spirit, but in difficult ones to trust to our own? Is grace to decide in usual cases, but the final appeal to be left to nature? "Having begun in the Spirit are we made perfect in the flesh?" And is not the fit answer to such difficulties as have been suggested, that a contradiction between Scripture and the Church is an impossible supposition, seeing that the Divine Spirit, whose presence is her life, is the same, "who spake by the Prophets?"

All this, which is manifest from the nature of the case, is fully borne out by the Church's own testimony respecting her office. It is witnessed by her manner of proceeding in Councils, which always professed to refer to the Scriptures, but to be guided in their interpretation not by logical argumentation, but by the Spirit of God. A certain habitual, inherent indwelling of the Holy Ghost was supposed to preserve the collective Body of Christ in that ancient track, which had been marked out by the Apostles. As new errors arose, and new emergencies, the Spirit of a Divine wisdom was believed to supply the materials for meeting them, out of the inexhaustible storehouse of the original revelation. If a fresh meaning, or an additional force, was given to ancient statements, it was only because the "instructed scribe" was bringing "forth out of his treasures things new and old." And this constant practice of the Church in her public actions is avowed by her writers from the very beginning. They all assume her to possess a collective wisdom, to which individuals were bound to render practical submission; and how could practical submission be claimed save for a body, which had the right of final adjudication? For why would it have been men's duty to submit, instead of adopting that course which was suggested by their private reasonings, unless the body, which demanded their obedience, had been guided by a higher wisdom? And this, accordingly, is the principle which is asserted by ancient writers—that men ought not to set up their private reason against the judgment

of the Church, because theirs are mere human theories, whereas she is guided by the Spirit of God. Thus does St. Irenæus speak of the duty of obeying those "who with the succession of the Episcopate have received the unfailing grace of truth, according to the pleasure of the Father:"<sup>15</sup> and again, "where the gifts of grace have been deposited by Our Lord, there we ought to seek the truth, among those who possess that succession of the Church which is derived from the Apostles."<sup>16</sup> And while in the former of these places he censures those who from their own reasonings depart from the "great succession of the Church," he finds fault elsewhere with the Marcosians, who pretended to a private inspiration, and asserted that they could "announce the unknown Father," "boasting themselves to be the pure and discerning ones."<sup>17</sup> "Unhappy people," he says again, "who choose to be false prophets, and deny the grace of prophecy to the Church."<sup>18</sup>

These passages not only exhibit the Church as a final authority, and as supplying interpretations which did not admit of being carried on appeal before the higher tribunal of individual reason; but they illustrate the principle on which this belief depends, namely, that the Divine Spirit which has its dwelling in the collective Body, is our sole guide in the things of God. So that as Origen expresses it, Scripture cannot be properly understood unless men keep to "the rule of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ, as it has been handed down to us by the Apostles."<sup>19</sup> And, therefore, in speaking of the Old Testament, he says, "if the Law of God is received according to that mode of understanding it, which the Church teaches, then it plainly excels all human laws."<sup>20</sup> But the ultimate proof of this, after all, is the Church's practice. For as time went on, new points of doctrine were continually decided, and the Creed grew up from the primordial simplicity of the second century until it attained the structure of the symbol of St. Athanasius. How could the Church have required assent to the various results which were thus evolved, unless she had been conscious of authority to propound them? How could she have been justified in excluding

<sup>15</sup> iv. 26, 2.<sup>16</sup> iv. 26, 5.<sup>17</sup> i. 19, 2, and 20, 3.<sup>18</sup> iii. 11, 9.<sup>19</sup> *De Principiis*, iv. 9, p. 166.<sup>20</sup> *Hom. vii. in Levit. v.* p. 226.



objectors from those sacraments which she held to be necessary to salvation, or in giving opportunity for those divisions which formed the most effectual obstacle to the growth of Christ's kingdom, unless she had been possessed of some peculiar office, and some unfailing criterion? Yet was this the whole course of her history. And her greatest minds refer, like St. Augustin, to that "most firm corroboration, which was derived from the consent of the Catholic Church throughout the world,"<sup>21</sup> and excuse those who had previously held erroneous opinions on an important point of doctrine, "because the Church had not as yet the decision of a plenary Council concerning this subject."<sup>22</sup> "For if it be always open to human opinions to dispute," says St. Facundus, "there will never be wanting those who dare to resist the truth. And truly what will be the end of contentions and disputes, if it be allowed that those things, which have been settled by the consent of the whole Church, should again be brought to judgment? Why may not this further judgment itself be judged over again?"<sup>23</sup>

III. But was the Church's office of judge intended to be perpetual? We have seen that it was a power which in early days she both claimed and exercised: and in doing so, she did but execute that function which was assigned her by Our Lord. And since it was an office, which followed directly from her nature, and resulted from that presence of the Holy Ghost, which was the principle of her existence, and cause of her life, her decision could not fail to be final, and must needs cover the whole field of Gospel truth. But was this system to continue, or were Christian people in after times to be left without the benefit of that Divine guidance which had been once possessed? What is stated on this subject in Scripture, as explained by the voice of that early Church, which on every principle has a right to be its interpreter?

Now, if we consider the nature of the Church's authority,

<sup>21</sup> De Bapt. c. Don. iii. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Quia plenarium de hac re concilium nondum habebat Ecclesia.—*De Bapt. c. Don.* iv. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Pro Defens. Tr. Cap. ii. 6. Bib. Pat. Max. x. 20.

how can we doubt of its perpetuity? For it has been shown to depend upon the presence of that Holy Spirit, who is the very principle of her life. To ask, therefore, whether the Church is to continue to possess authority, is to ask, in fact, whether she is to continue to exist. And this question can be answered only by reference to those promises of Our Lord, and to those statements of His Apostles, which imply that He had founded a Kingdom of which there should be no end. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Whether we look to Our Lord's Parables, or to the vision of the beloved disciple, we see no hint that the Gospel Kingdom was to terminate like those earthly empires by which it had been preceded. "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall first be preached throughout all nations, and then shall the end come." When Our Lord, therefore, asks the alarming question, "when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth," He does not refer to the existence of His Church, but to the consistency of its members. That faith, which leads men "always to pray and not to faint," has too often been wanting among His servants. But this gives us no reason to suppose that "the pillar and ground of the faith" would be altogether destroyed; or that there would be wanting those who would render to God "*glory in the Church* by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

The question, then, whether the Church is always to judge, resolves itself, in fact, into another—whether it is always to continue. So long as the Israelites had the pillar of the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, how could their path fail to be indicated by these heavenly monitors? And as Holy Scripture teaches us that the Church was meant to be a perpetual provision for the wants of the Spiritual Israel, so in that period of her history when she is admitted to have acted as a judge, and when she exercised this office in that most important particular of sanctioning the Canon of Scripture, her perpetuity was already understood, and spoken of as a necessary condition of her nature. In proof of this we need only appeal to that wonderful presentiment of its future greatness, by which

the Ancient Fathers of the Church were possessed. There is no clearer proof of their faith, than that they should have accepted so literally the predictions of Our Lord, and understood that He was speaking not merely of the diffusion of a literature, or the extension of a school, but of the growth of a Church. If the followers of Socrates appreciated the merits of their language, the noblest organ of spoken communication which has ever existed among men, and perceived the vast advance which their master had made on all former teachers of philosophy, they may well have formed high expectations of the influence which the system they had received was calculated to exercise. But here was a small band of men, who started in an obscure corner of the earth, among a despised and illiterate people; and yet they believed not only that their teaching was to influence the thoughts of others, but that the very institution which they founded was to be coeval with the world, and to extend throughout all nations. Yet the diffusion of a single religion through many countries, of which Christianity and Mahometanism have since been instances, was at that time without example in the history of the world. But they knew who had told them, that the Kingdom of Heaven, which as yet was only as a grain of mustard-seed, would be the "greatest among herbs," and become a tree, so that the birds of the air might "lodge in the branches thereof." Herein they discerned the meaning of those majestic promises of the earlier covenant, which had hitherto lain like pearls at the bottom of the great deep. Thus does St. Ignatius assign a meaning to the devotion of Mary: "On this account Our Lord received the myrrh upon His head, that He might infuse into His Church incorruptibility."<sup>24</sup> And St. Clement speaks of the Church as "a city upon earth, which can neither be taken, nor tyrannized over, being administered by the Word. It is God's will upon earth, as it is in Heaven. And of this city, that which the poets have feigned of the Hyperborean or Arimasian states, and of the Elysian fields, is a parable."<sup>25</sup> And so Origen, comparing the New with the Old Covenant: "Isaac builds an altar under the Law,

<sup>24</sup> Ad Ephes. xvii.

<sup>25</sup> Stromata, iv. 26, p. 642.

and fixes his tent there. But in the Gospel he does not fix a tent, but build a house, and lay a foundation. For hear Wisdom speaking concerning the Church: Wisdom, she says, has built her a house, and laid her seven columns. And hear St. Paul speaking about the same thing: Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, a tent, though it be fixed, is doubtless moveable, but where there are foundations, and the house is built upon a rock, that house is immovable."<sup>26</sup> And again on the Psalms: "By the mountain of God is to be understood the Church." "To this mountain it has been the Father's good pleasure to give an unshaken power; and the Church reigns mightily over aught besides upon earth, ruling together with Christ."<sup>27</sup>

Nowhere is this strong presentiment of the Christian mind more strikingly shown than in that very early document, the letter to Diognetus. "What the soul is in the body, such in the world are the Christians. The soul is diffused through all members of the body, and the Christians through all cities of the earth." "When the soul is straitened in food and drink, it is amended, and the Christians being daily persecuted, are increased. Such a post has God assigned them, which they may not lawfully decline."<sup>28</sup> For already could St. Irenæus speak of "the Church" as "diffused throughout all the world," but "having one soul, and one heart," "as though it inhabited a single mansion:"<sup>29</sup> and somewhat later the Council of Alexandria speaks of "the one and only Catholic Church" as "for ever indestructible, though the whole world should war against it, and victorious over every rising of heretics."<sup>30</sup> Nor do these writers fail to point out that the teaching office of the Church is to be as enduring as its existence. The belief of the Church during the second century is expressed by an ancient writer against the Montanists: "That the gift of prophecy must remain in the whole Church till the final coming of Our Lord, is avouched by the Apostle."<sup>31</sup> And so St. Athanasius, explaining the words of the Psalm, "his seat is like as the sun before Me:" "By the

<sup>26</sup> In Genesim, Hom. xiv. 2.

<sup>27</sup> In Psalm xxix. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Ad. Diognet. 6.

<sup>29</sup> i. 10, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Harduin i. p. 305.

<sup>31</sup> Eusebius, v. 17. and Epiph. p. 403.

throne of Christ understand the Church, for He has His abiding in it. The Church of Christ, he says, therefore, shall shine, and enlighten the whole region under Heaven, and continue permanently as the sun and the moon.”<sup>32</sup> And so St. Chrysostom: “The Church is more firmly fixed than Heaven itself. Perhaps some Greek charges me with madness: but let him wait for the truth of the matter, and learn the force of the truth, that it is easier that the sun should be extinguished, than that the Church should be obscured. Who is it, he asks, that proclaims this? He who has founded her. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”<sup>33</sup> And St. Peter Chrysologus: “That you may confess that the Church, as the bride of Christ, will abide in union with Him for ever.”<sup>34</sup>

But nowhere is the statement, that the Church is designed to be a permanent instructor, brought out so forcibly as in St. Augustin’s controversy with the Donatists. The first *great* party which separated from the Church, on a point of discipline, rather than of doctrine, St. Augustin’s main argument against them was, that the Church universal was intended to be a permanent witness to the truth, and that this perpetuity of its office was matter of revelation. “Hence it comes,” he says, “that the true Church can never be concealed. From which follows that, which Our Lord says in the Gospel, ‘a city which is set on an hill cannot be hid.’”<sup>35</sup> And again: “Sion, the city which is set on a mountain, has this certain sign, that it cannot be hidden. Therefore, it is known to all nations.”<sup>36</sup> “Think upon the seed of Abraham which in God’s Testament is said to increase as the stars of Heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore, and then venture to think whether for some few hidden tares in Africa so copious a harvest can have been able to perish from the soil of the world.”<sup>37</sup> Then referring to the case of St. Cyprian, who, he says, had not separated himself as the Donatists had,

<sup>32</sup> In Psalm, lxxxviii. 38. p. 1160.

<sup>33</sup> Hom. in illud vidi Dominum, iv. 2. vol. 6. p. 122.

<sup>34</sup> Sermo. lxi. Bib. Patr. vii. 893.

<sup>35</sup> “Ut Ecclesia vera neminem lateat.”—*Cont. Litt. Petil.* ii. 74, 158. vid. also *De Unit.* 72.

<sup>36</sup> Id. 239. vid. *Con. Crescon*, iii. 71.

<sup>37</sup> *Con. Crescon.* iii. 79.



he adds, "The Church stands forth manifest and conspicuous to all nations, as a city set on a mountain, which cannot be hid, through which Christ reigns from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." "It was so much the object of Cyprian's eulogy, that he speaks of it as besprinkled with the Lord's light, and as extending its rays throughout the world."<sup>38</sup> "This Church, which was matter of promise in Holy Scripture, and which now is afforded us throughout the world, Cyprian loved, and held to."<sup>39</sup>

Such is the view of the Church's authority, which is given to us by those to whom we owe the Canon of Scripture. They maintain that the Church is the interpreter of doctrine, by reason of that indwelling of the Holy Ghost, which is the very condition of its existence; and that this circumstance renders its judgment final and without appeal. And that such an office, was to pertain to it in perpetuity, they gather from the promises of Holy Writ. But before passing to another subject, it will be well to notice some difficulties, by which these conclusions will seem to be embarrassed.

It may be thought that this view of things is derogatory to the dignity of Holy Scripture, and an infringement on the rights of individual conscience. On this subject something has been said in another place,<sup>40</sup> where it was shown that the existence of Church-authority is in perfect harmony with the principles of the Christian Dispensation, and results from that law of the New Creation, whereby the natural reason of the children of Adam has been exalted into the higher wisdom of the family of Christ. And this was shown to be so far from being derogatory either to scripture or reason, that it has been found, in fact, to be the real means of preserving the one, and of perfecting the other. For reason has attained its most perfect growth, where a central authority has restrained its eccentricities; and Scripture has been most revered by those, who admitted that its custody was with the Church. Here, then, it will be enough to make a few remarks of a more practical character.

The objection that Church-authority interferes either with

<sup>38</sup> Con. Crescon. lib. ii. 45.

<sup>39</sup> Id. 42.

<sup>40</sup> Doctrine of the Incarnation, cap. xiv.

the respect which is due to the Inspired Volume, or with its use, arises entirely from a forgetfulness that the real question is, not what is the law, but who is the judge. The laws of the land do not lose their validity, because one judge succeeds another; why should the laws of God suffer detriment, because their appointed interpreter is not individual reason, but the collective wisdom of the Body of Christ? It is idle, therefore, to allege passages from the ancient writers, in which they insist either on the perfection of Holy Scripture, or on its capacity to render those who duly study it, wise unto salvation. For the question is, who is the right student? the failure is not alleged to be in the rule, but in its interpreter. And the same writers who know not how to express themselves highly enough respecting the perfections of Scripture, are as express as possible in declaring that it cannot be studied rightly without reference to the guidance of the Church. "They all quote Scripture," says St. Hilary of the heretics, "but without the sense of Scripture;"<sup>41</sup> for "those who are out of the Church cannot have any understanding of the Divine word."<sup>42</sup> "In this matter," says St. Augustin, "we hold the truth, when we do that which has been decided upon by that Church Universal, which is commended to us by the authority of the Scriptures themselves; that since sacred Scripture cannot be erroneous, he who fears to fall into error through the obscurity of this question, may consult about it that same Church which Holy Scripture unambiguously points out to him."<sup>43</sup> The Holy Apostles, we may well suppose, discerned the whole scope and relations of the covenant of God: the secrets of His unknown kingdom were laid open to them; but they applied themselves to the correction of existing evils; and they fed their converts with milk or with meat, according to their need. Hence, many points of great moment did not become subjects of detailed instruction in the Apostolic writings. We hear little about the existing office and duties of the Christian Priesthood; and nothing respecting that interference of kings and governments in the affairs of the Church, which is now a

<sup>41</sup> Ad Constant. ii. 9. p. 1230.

<sup>42</sup> In Matthæum, xiii. 1. p. 675.

<sup>43</sup> Cont. Cresc. i. 33.

subject of so much perplexity. For the one was not disputed apparently in the age of the Apostles, and the other had not yet commenced. On such points, then, we may argue from the principles which have been laid down in Holy Writ, and we may draw inferences from the allusions which have been made to them. But who is to judge the fairness of our inferences, and the cogency of our arguments? Is it the private reason of men, or the Divine Wisdom speaking through the Church? Whichever *judge* we take, it is plain that the authority of the *law* remains unaltered. "The sacred Scriptures themselves are of no use unless you understand them rightly. For all heretics, who admit them to be of authority, appear to themselves to follow them, when they rather follow their own errors; and it is not, therefore, because they condemn the Scriptures, but because they misinterpret them, that they are heretics."<sup>44</sup> For "the Scripture does not consist in reading certain words, but in understanding them."<sup>45</sup>

But, then, it may be said, this is to dethrone human reason, which God has given to every man as his guide in the determination of truth. Now it is not disputed that reason has its functions: reason is supreme in things natural, and it is the guide which leads us to that higher Teacher, by whom we are instructed in things divine. But it cannot, surely, be maintained that a man's own reason ought always to be confided in, even by himself. Is it ever made a ground of complaint, that the private reason of the people of England is interfered with by the decisions of the Courts of Westminster? Yet many a law would be interpreted differently, if men were left to apply it by individual reason to their own case. But that laws may not be a mere mockery, it has been found necessary that there should not only be a statute-book, according to which justice should be administered, but a judge to administer it. Now, if men are admitted to be partial in deciding for themselves things earthly, why should they be supposed infallible in interpreting things divine?

Further: If it is inconsistent with reason to allow of a judge of faith, it is inconsistent with it also to allow of a revelation. For is not our reason interfered with by the fact, that God

<sup>44</sup> St. Aug. Ep. cxx. 13.

<sup>45</sup> St. Jerom. ad. Lucif. vol. iv. 2, p. 360.

spoke once, as really as it is by the fact, that He speaks always? It requires to be proved, of course, that God has given His Church "authority in controversies of faith," and grounds for believing it have already been adduced; but if this fact be rejected as an infringement on the independence of human reason, why should we not also reject revelation at large?

But it may be asked again, if Church-authority be indeed so weighty, how came Our Lord and His Apostles to reject that of the Jewish Church? For they disregarded the judgment of the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat "in Moses's seat" as his official representatives. But it is not the judgment of every Society which is to be accepted, but only the judgment of that particular Society, which makes up the Body, and is instinct with the Spirit of Christ. Now to all this the rulers of the Jewish Church had no claim. As Adam's body consisted of inert matter till God breathed into it the breath of life, so the very College of Apostles had no claim to the gift of guidance till the day of Pentecost. Therefore, did they complete their own number by lot, and not by election. Much less could the chiefs of the ancient Covenant assert for themselves a prerogative, which belongs specifically to the New. No doubt the Jewish authorities possessed certain powers, which were recognized by Our Lord, and had been committed to them by Moses. But these powers did not grow out of the constitution of their body, but depended upon express enactment; and they related rather to that legal superintendence which pertained to the Theocracy, than to the interpretation of doctrine. That their authority in this respect should have been superseded by Our Lord's, is only a part of a wider question, which is not free from difficulty. For was not the Law of Moses, in fact, superseded by its fulfilment in Christ? So that the rejection of the Jews might seem to have arisen from their attachment to the Mosaic ritual; and how could this be a fulfilment of those predictions of Deuteronomy, which were denounced against its abandonment? It may be replied, that if the Jews had obeyed the Law of Moses more perfectly, they would have perceived that Our Lord was "that prophet" of whom their

Lawgiver spoke. And the same thing which is true of the people is true of their rulers. They, too, had they used their authority more properly, would have accepted Him, of whom they were the unconscious delegates. But that their office differed wholly from that which He conferred on His disciples, is obvious from the different manner of its appointment. The commission which Moses gave was in writing; and its solemn ratification before his death prescribes the exact limits of the system which he established. There was nothing like the institution of a body, which succeeded to peculiar powers from the very frame of its constitution. And there are obvious reasons for the difference. For the Law of Moses was a republication of natural religion, accompanied by a complicated ritual, which might sever his people from all other nations, and supply a typical prediction of the coming of Christ. But it did not enter into those deep mysteries respecting the nature of God and the nature of man, which have been revealed to the Church. Its most important statements related to the obligations of conscience, or led to the future actions of the Word made flesh. On them, therefore, we find a continual advance in the discernment of Jewish teachers, as we rise from Samuel to the Psalmist, or the Evangelical Prophet. So, too, the writers of the Apocrypha show knowledge respecting a future state, which implies an advance in the mind of the nation. But all this differs greatly from those majestic conceptions respecting the Blessed Trinity, and that wide opening into the mysteries of grace, which were reserved for the final Revelation. If Judaism, then, did not supply the same authoritative principle of guidance, which has since been exhibited, it must be remembered, that she did not deal with the higher mysteries of Theology: she had her pathetic Psalms and her inspired Prophets, but the Eucharistic Liturgies and the Creed of St. Athanasius are the heritage of the Church.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE COLLECTIVE EPISCOPATE, THE MEDIUM OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

THE Church's existence has been shown to result from Christ's coming in the flesh. For it is no factitious institution, depending for its perpetuation upon arbitrary rules, but an organized body, which derives life from union with its Incarnate Head. And hence arises the extent and perpetuity of its office as a witness to doctrine. For its power to judge is not an accidental character with which it is invested, but a function of that life which is the condition of its being. We must now consider what means it has pleased God to bestow upon it for the discharge of its trust; what organs it possesses, what is the arrangement of its frame. For it would be a contradiction to suppose that an institution was founded by God for some great purpose, but left destitute of any means by which that purpose should be attained. Every machine has some fitness for the work assigned to it; much more, then, a machine of which "the Maker and Builder" was "God."

But before entering upon this subject we must retrace our steps, and consider somewhat more fully what is meant when the Church is called an *organized Society*. Hereby she is distinguished from all such institutions as arise merely from the voluntary association of individuals, who combine because their inclination leads them, and may separate as readily as they unite. Whereas an organized society is one which has grown into shape through the operation of some fixed law; the parts are united by an external bond, and cannot be

dissevered without its disruption. Of this sort is pre-eminently the society of mankind; it has its bond of association in that natural order of relationship, which follows from our descent from a single parent; it is the indefeasible law of our being; God "has made of one blood all nations of the earth." And even the tie of separate nationality falls in a measure within the same rule. For national union has its root in that division of languages, which was imposed as an external restraint upon the self-sufficiency of mankind. True, political divisions have not always respected this principle of demarcation; but the difference of language first occasioned the divergence between different races; it has given fixedness to those varieties of national character which have been produced by climate, circumstances, or institutions; and thus has given birth to those distinctions, which have gone on increasing ever since "the nations" were "divided in the earth after the flood." Thus does national distinction resemble that which obtains among the subordinate species of the same class of animals; it may be effaced by the fusion of races, but to each individual it is an external and unalterable tie. And, therefore, does such union engender a peculiar character, which reflects itself in the institutions of different states.

Now that the natural associations of mankind have had their origin in creation and language, renders it probable that the new law of the Gospel was designed to initiate some analogous institution. For its introduction was built upon two circumstances, which bear distinct reference to these two great antecedents in human history. The gift of Pentecost, whereby the Church was quickened into actual life, was the counterpart of the division of tongues; and thereby has the spiritual Jerusalem become an exact antithesis to Babel. And the elements of the new kingdom received their original being through that re-creation of humanity in Christ, whereby Our Lord became the last Adam. These two events, then—the re-creation of humanity through the taking of the manhood into God, and the reunion of mankind in the oneness of the Spirit—might be expected to lead to some association as permanent as nationality or descent. Such, then, must be

the law whereby men are united as members in the Body of Christ. For this is that organized institution which answers to the natural associations of mankind: the members of Christ answer to the seed of Adam: Christ is incarnate in history, because He was incarnate in His Flesh. "For He is Head over all things to the Church; which is His Body, the *fulness* of Him that filleth all in all."

Let us dwell somewhat on the meaning of these wondrous words. Our Lord was not complete without a body: His Infinite Godhead found itself abridged without this addition—through the infinity of His love, not the deficiency of His nature. To supply this want did He take our flesh of the substance of His Virgin Mother, and made that nature, which He had created, a part of Himself. But neither was His Manhood complete without further addition; He needed to take into it all Christians, that the end for which He had assumed it might be absolutely reached. Humanity had been originally exhibited in the person of Adam. But something more was contemplated by its Maker; His promise of "dominion over all the earth" implied the multiplication of the species; the principle of humanity must reproduce itself; it must take up fresh matter from the earth, and mould it into a multiplicity of human limbs. So has it gone on ever since; Adam has multiplied himself in the types of his being; the impulse is still extending; the wave grows larger as it spreads; and a greater measure of the dust of the earth is now organized in human forms than at any previous period. This is effected through the operation of two laws, birth and nourishment. By the first new candidates are brought upon the stage; the second clothes them with strength. And the same happens in respect to Christ's Body. Since it cannot do without us, since it needs to take fresh members into its constitution, therefore, have two means been provided, analogous to the laws of birth and nourishment, whereby the growth of its organization might be produced. The first is that ordinance of Baptism, which answers to natural birth. For "thus does Christ generate in His Church through His priests. And so the seed of Christ, that is, the Spirit of God, gives forth through the hands of the priest the new man—received

through the birth of the Font.”<sup>1</sup> The second is that Holy Eucharist, which not only nourishes individuals by bestowing upon them the Body of Christ, but likewise augments the Body<sup>2</sup> of Christ, by the assimilation of those living elements of which it is compounded. For in this sacrament that which is bestowed is Christ’s Natural Body, which is given to each receiver under the form of bread and wine; but that which is built up is Christ’s Body Mystical, which grows by this perpetual communication of Himself. Thus do these two laws produce that effect of which St. Paul speaks; the perpetual addition of His members is the complement which Our Lord has been pleased to render necessary to the full purpose of His Incarnation in the flesh; thus does He “see His seed,” and like our first parent, assimilate to Himself materials, which may be moulded into the organization of the primary type. So that Christ’s members are indeed the “fulness of Him that filleth all in all;” they are bound to Him by that actual incorporation, which renders them part of Himself: they are “members of His Body, from His flesh and from His bones.” And, consequently, they are plainly bound to Him by an actual union; as strong as that of the old, must be the relation of the new nature; the latter also must depend upon law, and not merely upon consent; there must be a real life in this society, which must maintain the coherence of all its parts. “The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.” The society to which the first man gave birth is amenable to natural observation, and sense and reason assure us of its existence; but since the second depends upon that divine teaching which is given through the Gospel, its evidence is through revelation and its acceptance by faith. And hence have all following generations been pledged by their forefathers in the faith, to “believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

<sup>1</sup> Ex his nuptiis Christiana plebs nascitur, veniente desuper spiritu Domini. Atque ita Christi semen, id est, Dei Spiritus novum hominem alvo matris agitatam, et partu fontis exceptum, manibus Sacerdotis effundit, fide tamen pronubâ.—*S. Pacian. de Baptis. Bib. Pat.* iv. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Dominus noster Jesus Christus vult pasci ministerio servorum suorum, hoc est in suum corpus quasi mactatos et manducatos transferre credentes.—*S. Aug. Quæst. Evan.* ii. 39.

Such, then, is the nature of the Christian Society ; this is the thing intended, when it is maintained, as in the preceding chapters, that the Body of Christ is an *organized whole*. But what was this Society designed to effect ? What were the ends and objects of that Gospel Kingdom, which Our Lord proposed to Himself to set up ? They are stated in sum at the opening of the last Gospel : “ the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” This twofold object, to communicate grace, and to witness to truth, was stated also by Our Lord before Pilate, and by St. Paul in his chief Epistle. To Pilate Our Lord stated the more external portion of His office, to “ bear witness to the truth :” to the Romans St. Paul explains its interior operation to be “ the power of God unto salvation.” “ For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” These two main effects, then, were to be produced by the institution of that society, which arose through the extension of the Body of Christ. And to effect them required no little wisdom, considering the difficulties which were opposed to its advance. For the world was already occupied by the societies to which the principles of nature had given birth. And though Our Lord declared that His Kingdom was “ not of this world,” and implied that the several nations of the earth should exist till His final return, yet Daniel’s vision indicated that there would be a certain resemblance between the Fifth Empire, and those by which it had been preceded. Like them it was to be an actual government or kingdom upon earth, implying, therefore, a system of law, and the relation and obedience of its several parts. Since it was to co-exist, then, with other forms of society, and not destroy them ; to gather in all mankind, but not do away with those institutions in which every individual had already his place ; it must in some way interpenetrate the existing mass without displacing it, as light pervades glass, or the galvanic shock the material by which it is communicated.

Here, then, lay the great difficulty of the task. For would not these several governments, by which the world was already possessed, be jealous of such an aggression ? Would they not denounce as anti-national the attempt to unite their



subjects into a new association, which should take precedence of all hereditary attachments? This was the very ground of the Pagan persecutions, and suggested itself naturally enough to each patriotic lover of his several country. Every nation on the earth had its hereditary religion, which was associated in common with the dearest recollections of its inhabitants. It was much to part with this; but still more to allow a new society, which professed to derive its root from foreign sources, to spread silently and secretly through the mass of the community, and associate men in a new form of citizenship. For this was not only an innovation on the national belief, but an assault upon the very principle of nationality. And, therefore, it appeared at variance with the original constitution of society, in which national union was the shape which Providence had assigned to the relations of mankind.

Again: If the hostility of governments was to be feared in the commencement, there was not less danger in the issue from their friendship. For suppose the principles of the Church to leaven the mind of a people, till they had not only expelled its old superstition, but formed the standard of its faith and morals. Suppose not only that all its citizens had become members of the Church, but that the maxims of the Gospel had been allowed to become political axioms in the land. In such a case the Church and State would so exactly coincide, that they would come to be looked upon as identical. Those who bore rule, therefore, in one, would probably be selected to bear rule in the other. So that the State would be absorbed by the Church, or the Church by the State, because the one left no room for the existence of the other. Would there be any evil, it may be said, in such an arrangement? For the Church's power of transmitting grace might be preserved, though it was intrusted to persons who were charged also with secular offices. But how could her office of witnessing to the truth be maintained? For the rulers of a nation must of necessity be affected by the national will, and cannot preserve that independence of local influences, which is essential to the guardianship of Catholic truth. We may see an instance in the case of the Bishop of Rome, whose position as an Italian prince must interfere at

times with his relations to the Episcopate, of which he is a member. Of this circumstance, Ranke's history affords examples, and they would be more apparent if the Papal States possessed a more popular government. Still more striking instances are afforded by the Protestant States of Germany, in which the temporal ruler has taken possession of the spiritual power, and prescribes the faith and worship of his subjects. So that it has become a motto, *cujus est regio, illius est religio*. And a Prussian writer<sup>3</sup> of ability and earnestness has lately told us, that the Church was an excellent institution in early times, and for the infancy of Christianity, but that its proper course and order was to be swallowed up finally in the State. He maintains the Church to have been a necessary medium of education, till nations had attained to that higher order of moral principles, which has now been reached; but since Christian maxims have become predominant, and the civil rulers of the world have qualified themselves for interfering in things spiritual, by professing belief in the Gospel, the duty of maintaining the truth has devolved upon them; and the scaffolding need not be retained, because the building is completed. Thus apparently would he justify the German Reformation: the functions, which once belonged to the Kingdom of Christ, are now discharged by the several nations, because the institutions of grace were meant to die out, and to be succeeded by the institutions of nature. So that it would seem as though the ancient creed ought to be amended, and in place of "one Catholic and Apostolic Church," we should express our belief in many uncatholic and unapostolic nations.

Such were the difficulties which opposed the Gospel Kingdom, from the opposition, or the friendship, of the kingdoms of the world. How should the new Society interpenetrate the old ones, without coming into collision with them in its youth, or being absorbed by them in its age? Those who believe that Christ had founded a Church, which was designed

<sup>3</sup> This is maintained by R the, *Die Anf nge der Christlichen Kirche*. His conclusion is, that "the form under which the religious, or to speak more exactly, the Christian Life in its completeness—the religious, or to speak more exactly, the Christian community in its completeness—in a word, the completed Kingdom of God upon earth—is realized, cannot be thought of as the Church, but by all means only as the State." p. 61.

to extend as widely as the earth, and to endure throughout all time, will conclude that its constitution was so framed, as to guard against these dangers. And such a provision He was pleased to make, by laying down as the law of its organization, that *the same persons, who were individually the dispensers of grace, should collectively be the witnesses to doctrine.* Through this simple arrangement, the Church both extended itself in spite of the opposition of governments, and continues to exist, notwithstanding their support. The first point was secured through the simplicity and unobtrusiveness of the means which were adopted. If the Apostles had been invested with a power of government, in the same formal manner, in which this office was committed to Moses, they must have excited the immediate jealousy of the rulers of the world: without a special miracle, the new society must have been extinguished, by the destruction of its chiefs. But when the Apostles went forth one by one to communicate to individuals the gifts of grace, there was nothing to excite jealousy. The mustard-seed escaped notice through its very insignificance, till it had sprung up, and filled the earth. "So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how." Against such an assault the masters of thirty legions could not guard, any more than they could prevent the darkness of night from being penetrated by the beams of day. The new system had come to its maturity before they were aware of its existence; and suddenly "men cry that the state is beset, that the Christians are in their fields—in their forts—in their islands. They mourn as for a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and now even rank is going over to this sect."<sup>4</sup>

And as the first growth of the Christian Society was facilitated by the simplicity of that power, which was committed to individual teachers, who having "freely received" must "freely give;" so was its continuance guaranteed by the circumstance that their office, as the witnesses to doctrine, was bestowed upon them *collectively*. For this condition secures the Christian society from those dangers, to which it would

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, Apol. i. 1.

otherwise be exposed, wheresoever its rulers are hampered by the appendages of worldly greatness. So long as the principle is maintained, that the custody of doctrine is a deposit, which has been committed to them in common, the Church's representatives in each several country, cannot adapt the one unalterable faith to national prejudices or local influences. The preponderance of race and institutions is balanced by that Catholic element, which speaks in the consent of the Church throughout the world. For a season, indeed, the Church was almost conterminous with the Roman Empire; so that this principle may have seemed scarcely powerful enough to save it from corruption. But it had so recently existed as an independent body, that its new governors could hardly pretend that they had conferred upon it its commission; and there can be no plausibility in such an opinion, now that it extends through various continents, and interpenetrates the heterogeneous states of modern Christendom.

We must show, then, that this was the system which it pleased God to appoint: that the custody of doctrine was lodged in the same hands, to which the dispensation of grace was committed: but that the last was to be exercised individually, while the former was a common trust, which appertained in co-partnership to the collective whole. Now, so long as the Christian system dwelt in its Head, it is obvious that its several offices were united; while Our Lord was upon earth, the Christian dispensation centred in His Humanity; so that grace and doctrine dwelt together in His single Person for the renewal of the world. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of *grace* and *truth*." And that which had dwelt perfectly in Himself, He bestowed in degree upon His Apostles. For "as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Here was something bestowed upon them individually, and something as a common trust. The gift of the Holy Ghost, from which they possessed those powers of communicating grace, which they exercised both in person and

by deputy—this was a separate endowment, of which each of them became individually possessed. But the common commission, the authority to represent their Lord, the transmission of that one system, which Our Lord had commenced, and which was now intrusted to their keeping—this was a federal trust, in which they all equally partook. And, therefore, so soon as the gift of Pentecost had given life to the office, with which they were intrusted, we find the Apostles showing that they were the inheritors of *His* commission, who came to witness to the truth, and to impart spiritual blessings. For, “with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.” So that while individually they exercised those spiritual functions, for which they were ordained; they possessed among them that one deposit of truth, with which they were intrusted.

This trust, committed collectively and individually to the College of Apostles, is expressed figuratively by St. John, when he speaks of the *one* spiritual city as having “twelve foundations; and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.” And so St. Paul describes the one Christian household, as “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.” Its reference to the transmission of the one common doctrine is evidenced by the choice of St. Matthias into the vacant “ministry and apostleship,” in order that he might be “ordained to be a witness” to Christ. And St. Paul, who was called after the rest into co-partnership in this common commission, received the “Gospel” which he preached “not after man,” nor “of man,” “but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Thus was the transmission of *doctrine* intrusted to those, to whom, through their office of laying on of hands, the *government* of the infant society was of necessity committed. For since its extension depended on the giving or withholding of the offices of the ministry, to decide whom they should trust, and on what principles, must have rested with the Apostles. So that St. Peter speaks of them as possessing the power of making laws in the infant Church: he bids his brethren to “be mindful” “of the commandments of us, the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”



It is by reference to this principle that we must understand the proceedings of the Council of Jerusalem. When "the Apostles and elders came together for to consider," the inferior members of the Church cannot have had the same voice in questions of doctrine with those inspired Apostles, to whom Our Lord had committed the commission, which He had received from His Father. Indeed, on natural principles this would have been unreasonable, for while the whole College of Apostles were gathered together, those of an inferior order, and the lay brethren, were either dwellers at Jerusalem, or consisted of the few who had come up from Antioch. How could these undertake to make laws which should be binding on the collective Church? So far, indeed, as the decision was a concession on the part of the Jewish Christians to their Gentile brethren, there was a fitness in gaining the concurrence of those, whose acquiescence might otherwise have been doubtful. But the "elders and brethren" at Jerusalem could only express their individual consent, and not pledge the general will. More than this they could not do, unless God had delegated them to command, or men to assent. Whereas, the commission with which the Apostles had been endowed, gave them authority to speak as the collective body, to which had been intrusted the government of the Church.

The office, then, which Our Lord committed to the Apostles was to represent Himself: "I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So has their office been always understood in the Church: "the Apostles," says the Church's earliest writer, "were put in trust with the Gospel for us by Our Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ by God."<sup>5</sup> And they are perpetually spoken of by later authorities as "the foundations, in which the faith of the Church was laid,"<sup>6</sup> as "the chiefs of our system, and the leaders of the Christian doctrine."<sup>7</sup> But this office, which had been bestowed upon the Apostles, could not be designed

<sup>5</sup> St. Clem. ad Cor. 42.

<sup>6</sup> St. Jerome on Ps. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Id. in Jovin. i. 14.

to pass away with themselves. For they were but one link in a chain, which time was not to outreach. Our Lord had commissioned them to be His witnesses even to "the uttermost part of the earth," and had pledged to them His Presence "even to the end of the world." The whole earth was filled by that Mountain which was beheld by Daniel. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah refer to a covenant and a blessing, which should never pass away.<sup>8</sup> These things could not be accomplished unless persons were appointed to carry on that work, which had been commenced by the Apostles.

Now, there is sufficient evidence both that their office was transmitted to others, and that their successors, though not endowed with that individual inspiration, which the Apostles had possessed, yet exercised the same superintendence *singly* in the government of the Church, and *collectively* discharged the same function in witnessing to its doctrine. For besides those two inferior orders of Presbyters and Deacons, on which had devolved the ordinary duties of the Ministry under the Apostles, distinct mention is made of a higher class of officers, to whom the Apostles before their death bequeathed the government of the Churches. To this circumstance St. Irenæus, a most competent witness, bears full testimony. He appeals to the notorious fact that the body of Bishops were the representatives of the Apostles, as the best proof that the inheritance of doctrine had not been impaired. "We can number up those, whom the Apostles appointed Bishops in the Churches, and their successors down to ourselves." "For if the Apostles had possessed any hidden mysteries, which they were wont to teach apart and secretly to the perfect, they would have communicated them to those more especially, to whom they committed the care of the Churches."<sup>9</sup> And Tertullian in like manner represents it as the criterion of orthodox Churches, that they should be able to "unfold the roll of their Bishops, so coming down in succession from the beginning, that their first Bishop had for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the Apostles, or of Apostolic men, so he were one that continued steadfast with the Apostles. For in this

<sup>8</sup> Vide Jer. xxxi. 31, as explained Heb. viii. 8. Is. xxx. 20; lxvi. 22, &c.

<sup>9</sup> iii. 3, 1.

manner do the Apostolic Churches reckon their origin ; as the Church of Smyrna recounteth that Polycarp was placed there by John ; as that of Rome doth that Clement was in like manner ordained by Peter. Just so can the rest also show those, whom being appointed by the Apostles to the Episcopate, they leave as transmitters of the Apostolic seed.”<sup>10</sup> And that it was a distinct order to which this power was committed, we know from the manner in which it is mentioned along with the other two, not only by St. Clement<sup>11</sup> at the end of the second century, but by St. Ignatius at its commencement.<sup>12</sup> The history, also, of St. Ignatius’s martyrdom recounts how “the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Churches of Asia”<sup>13</sup> came forth to receive him on his way to Rome.

Now, to object that such a power as devolved upon the Bishops would require some distinct charter in their favour—that an inheritance of so much importance could not have passed to them without some more formal document—is to forget that the very principle of the Church is to be a corporate body, which must needs, therefore, have organs for transmitting the gift of which it is the depository. For the *authority* of which the order of Bishops was possessed, resulted from the single fact, that in them lay the organization, through which the life of the Body was continued. And the circumstances of the time account for their silent accession to the functions which they inherited. When Joshua succeeded to the rule of Moses, it was natural that the office which had been borne by the one, should be transferred in the most public manner to the other. The progress of a conquering nation made it necessary that its chief should have power of life and death over the whole people ; and the notoriety with which this power was imparted, increased the terror which it was desirable to diffuse among the surrounding tribes. We have, therefore, a recorded acknowledgment on the part of his followers : “ Whosoever he be that rebelleth against thy commandment—he shall be put to death :” and he took care to make the law, which he administered, known to the people : “ there was not a word,

<sup>10</sup> De Præscrip. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Stromata, vi. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Magnes. 6. Philad. 7. Trallian. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Martyr. St. Ign. 3.

which Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel." But the Gospel Kingdom was not to conquer by force, but by persuasion. To call attention to the power which its rulers possessed, was inconsistent with its purpose of interpenetrating the existing institutions of the world. "The kingdom of God cometh not of observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is among you." All which is requisite, therefore, is to show that those, on whose agency its continuity depended, made provision for extending the system which had been administered by themselves. And this is abundantly proved by the manner in which the last surviving Apostles filled up the offices of government. On the death of St. James, the surviving Apostles assembled to appoint a Bishop for the Mother-Church at Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup> St. Peter provided his successor at Rome; <sup>15</sup> while St. John is not only known to have left his disciple, St. Polycarp, as Bishop at Smyrna, <sup>16</sup> but to have visited the adjoining provinces after his return from Patmos to Ephesus, that he might choose clergy and select Bishops. <sup>17</sup> Hence we find his disciple Papias <sup>18</sup> Bishop of Hierapolis, and Tertullian <sup>19</sup> refers to him as the more immediate head of the Episcopal order. Had St. John supposed that individuals were designed to make out their religion for themselves, from that written law which was provided for them in Scripture, he would surely have given this season to the work of collecting and authorizing its various books; his conduct, therefore, shows a belief that the Church would continue to be guided by living teachers. And by this means did it pass safely through that momentous crisis, which attended the removal of its first founders; so that when Hegesippus travelled to ascertain its state, a few years afterwards, he "held intercourse with many Bishops," and "found everywhere one and the self-same doctrine." "And men spoke of the Church as virgin, for as yet it was not corrupted with vain words." <sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Euseb. iii. 11.

<sup>15</sup> St. Iren. iii. 3. 3. as limited by Tert. de Præs. 32.

<sup>16</sup> St. Jerome Cat. Scrip. 17. St. Iren. iii. 3, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Euseb. iii. 23.

<sup>18</sup> St. Iren. v. 33. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Adv. Marc. iv. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Euseb. iv. 22.

The Episcopal order, then, succeeded to that care and government of the Church, which in their day had belonged to the Apostles. And that simple law, out of which had grown the authority of the Apostles, will be found to have given its character to that of their successors: the self-same body, of which the members *individually* were the dispensers of grace, was *collectively* the witness to doctrine. These two functions belonged to the Bishops, and out of them grew all their authority in the Church of God.

For there were two principles at work in every town or district visited by the Gospel, of which the combined result was manifested in that peculiar position which was occupied by the successors of the Apostles. One of these lay in the internal constitution of each portion of the Church; the other in the relation of each several portion to the whole. If we turn to the first, we find that everywhere men were conscious of an impulse to associate themselves with those societies, which rose up suddenly and simultaneously throughout the world. St. Paul, in his first written Epistle, expresses his feelings at that wonderful success, with which God was pleased to favour him. "We thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. For ye, brethren, became followers of the Churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." St. Paul was in no doubt, indeed, as to the cause of his success; he attributes it to that wondrous efficacy of God's Spirit, which alone could breathe order and unity into the moral world. "Our Gospel," he says, "came not unto you in word only, but in power." It was as when the seeds of plants, which have lain dormant during the cold of winter, are quickened into life by the warmth of spring. For the long winter of heathenism had passed away; the Sun of Righteousness had arisen; it was the spring-time of the new creation:

"Ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat  
orbis."



Just as plants, then, at this season have a power of assimilating to themselves the inert materials of the earth, and of moulding them into organic shapes, so had a Spirit gone forth among the nations, which was everywhere displaying itself in the forms of social life. It was a compelling efficacy, which excited in turn the alarm and derision of the world. "Though Celsus, or his Jew may jeer at it," says Origen, "I will nevertheless affirm that many have approached the Christian religion as though against their will; a certain spiritual power having suddenly changed their ruling principle from hatred to the word, to a willingness to die for it."<sup>21</sup> Now in nothing was the effect of this Spirit more remarkable, than in the manner in which it united many wills into a sacred unity, and absorbed all other ties in the fellowship of the Church. The martyr Sanctus, write the Christians of Gaul, withstood his torturers "so manfully, that he would neither tell his name nor his nation, nor of what city he was, nor whether bond or free, but to every question he replied, 'I am a Christian.' This stood in place of name, and city, and race."<sup>22</sup> And this forgetfulness of all other ties, was accompanied by that intense attachment to those with whom their new relationship connected them, which attracted the attention even of the heathen—"See, how these Christians love one another." So that they yielded ready obedience to the Apostle's injunction, "that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

Now, since the actions of the Christian societies were acts of worship and communion, since these gave expression to their common thoughts, and compensated to them for so many worldly sacrifices, it was impossible but that those who presided in their public assemblies, and whose ministrations were essential to their corporate existence, must hold a high place in their regard. For the very life of a Christian society lay in the functions which were thus discharged. The Christians had no worldly power or temporal position; the only thing which they could give or refuse was communion in

<sup>21</sup> Cont. Cels. i. 46.

<sup>22</sup> Eus. v. 1.

the offices of the Church. And hence grew up that intense interest in one another, as members of a common body, and especially in those who discharged the public functions of the Church, which finds expression in the Epistles of St. Ignatius. "All of you, receiving the same divine accordance of temper, respect one another, and let no one think of his neighbour according to the flesh, but love one another continually in Christ Jesus." Such was to be the character of the people over whom "the Bishop was to preside in the place of God, and the Presbyters in the place of the Synod of the Apostles, and the Deacons to be intrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ."<sup>23</sup> Thus did that new principle of affection and unity, which God the Holy Ghost had infused into mankind, lead to the building up in every district of a Christian Society, in which each man's personal affections and interests attached themselves to those who ministered among them in things sacred. And this feeling had its focus in him, who was necessarily the head and tie of the whole spiritual society, by reason of that ministerial commission of which he was the centre.

Such was the Bishop's position as viewed from beneath; as it was the result and culminating point of those forces, to which the Christian society owed its existence. The creative love of God, reproducing itself on earth in the love of the brethren, found in his person its especial centre of regard. For to be in union with him was to be in union with all the brethren, and "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" So that the Bishop was a sort of representative of the whole community, because in him centred all those ties, by which the whole body was bound together. Thus the letter of the Church at Rome to that at Corinth during the first century, was in fact written by Clement, its Bishop, because he supported the person of the whole Church. Hence the ancient rule, "the Church is in the Bishop, and the Bishop in the Church."<sup>24</sup> "If I in a short time," writes St. Ignatius to the Ephesians, "have gained such intimacy with your Bishop, not of an earthly, but a spiritual kind, how happy are you who have the same perfect union with him as the Church has with

<sup>23</sup> Ad Magnes. 6.

<sup>24</sup> St. Cypr. Ep. lxvi. 8. [Goldhorn.]

Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ with the Father, so that your unity and concord is complete.”<sup>25</sup> And so when those who had been led into schism by Novatian returned to the Church’s communion, their confession was, “we are not ignorant that God is one, that Christ Our Lord, whom we have confessed, is one, that one is the Holy Ghost, and that there ought to be one Bishop in a Catholic Church.”<sup>26</sup>

But this relation between Christians and their spiritual rulers did not depend merely upon the feelings of individuals, even though derived from a divine source. Besides those causes of unity which resulted from the combining affection of many brethren, the Church had its higher cause of oneness, as the channel of those mysterious and ineffable operations, whereby the One Head communicated Himself to His members. “For there is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” If the Bishop’s office, then, resulted from those sympathies, which grew up from beneath; it depended, likewise, upon those graces, which were communicated from above. It was not only the means whereby many individuals united themselves into a whole; but whereby also they were put into relation with that greater whole, which was Catholic and universal. For the Church was not a mere democratic confederacy, having its principle of union in the consent of mankind; but it was the infusing into the world of a supernatural life, by which many hearts were kindled into flame. True, the light extended itself into the darkest recesses, as the beams of the mid-day sun penetrate the deep; but the light had not its origin in any earthly source, but in the parent luminary from which it was reflected. The Church did not derive its existence from the consent or necessities of mankind, but from the Incarnation of the Son of God. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” As the Gospel, then, had its origin in the Word made Flesh, so was it a life which extended itself from Him to all members of His Mystical Body. And, therefore, did it exist in the world as

<sup>25</sup> Ad Ephes. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Cyp. Ep. xlix. 2.

one Body of life, and truth, and holiness, quickened by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and perpetuated by the ministrations of His servants. In this work the Apostles had been the first labourers, and through them did He, whom they had seen Incarnate in the Flesh, become mystically Incarnate in the congregation. "That which we have seen and heard," St. John says, "declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

This work, begun by the Apostles of the Lord, was perpetuated by their successors. They became, in turn, the spiritual fathers, through whom the Body of Christ was extended through the world. As Adam has multiplied himself through all those families of mankind, in which his primary type has been repeated, so the last Adam had his progeny through the spiritual law of grace and the ministration of sacraments. And thus might the chief minister of every Church say, in some sort, with the Apostle, "though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel." For since the power of ordaining inferior ministers lay in their chief, through him flowed that full stream of grace which gave life to the whole Church through the sacraments of the Gospel. Thus was the Bishop the medium of relation with the universal Church; through him the gifts of grace and truth were extended from the Body to individuals; to be out of communion with him was to be separate from that collective unity which had been sanctified by the taking of the manhood into God. Epiphanius, in his book on heresies, records the "rash innovation" of one Zacchæus,<sup>27</sup> who, when heresy and division had become rife in the Eastern Church, separated himself from all Christian communion, and thought to serve God alone. How could one who was thus separated from the Body hold the Head? "Do not be deceived brethren," writes St. Ignatius. "If any one follows a separatist, he inherits not the kingdom of God. If any one walks in another mind, he has nothing to do with the Passion. Be diligent, therefore, to keep to the one Eucharist. For there

<sup>27</sup> Adv. Hær. iii. 2, 13, vol. i. p. 1094.

is one Flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup whereby we are united to His Blood ; one altar, as there is one Bishop, with the Presbytery, and Deacons my fellow-servants, that whatsoever you do, you may do according to God's will."<sup>28</sup>

If the Bishop, then, was the centre of unity to each particular community, because in him the spiritual affections of all had their focus, so still more because he was their organ of communion with that Church Universal through which they were united to Christ. For thus did the one Catholic Body extend its ramifications throughout the world. Let us trace the action of either principle, as it was exhibited in the early growth of the Faith. This will show how completely the whole organization of the Church was the result of that one law, that those who were intrusted *individually* with the communication of grace, were *collectively* the witnesses to doctrine.

For though the Bishop's position in each Church was that which the affection of the people would naturally confer upon him, yet because he was their channel of communion with the Church Universal, his rights did not stand simply upon their concessions. The sole instrument of control which the early Church possessed, was its power of admitting or excluding from communion. This stood to it in place of all worldly sanctions, and was a prerogative which it could not lawfully forego. To be received into the Church by Baptism, to be restored to its communion after penance, to be admitted to the Holy Altar—these were blessings which no earthly power could obtain, but with which no one would dispense, who was acquainted with their value. The complaint made by heretics against the members of the Church was, that "without cause they abstained from their communion."<sup>29</sup> Now, to admit, or not to admit, men to such privileges, lay with the Bishop. So was it by the very nature of the case ; for as none could minister these blessings without Holy Orders, and none could possess Holy Orders, save by his act, it was in his power to cut off the stream through which blessings were communicated. And as this power was inherent in his office by the nature of the case, so did the Church's laws give it completely

<sup>28</sup> Ad Philad. 3, 4.

<sup>29</sup> S. Iren. iii. 15, 2.



into his hands. For every Priest was the Bishop's deputy, and was constantly responsible to his superior for those acts which he was commissioned to perform. That power which Our Lord bestows upon the Priesthood, he was supposed to bestow through the perpetual intervention of the Bishops: the Bishop is the immediate representative of Christ, but the Priest is the representative of his Bishop. So that the first holds immediately, but the second mediately only, from Our Lord. This is why the Primitive Church always spoke of the Bishops as in the place of Christ. St. Ignatius reminds the Magnesians, that they have not to do merely "with the Bishop himself, but with the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bishop of all."<sup>30</sup> So again, Onesimus is the "Bishop *in the flesh*"<sup>31</sup> to the Ephesians; and the Trallians<sup>32</sup> are bidden to "be subject to the Bishop as to Jesus Christ," and to regard him as "the Son of the Father;" while the Priesthood are compared to the Holy Apostles.

In accordance with these principles it was unlawful for any Priest to baptize or minister the Holy Eucharist without the Bishop's sanction. Not only were such offices originally conferred by consecration, but their continuous performance required a perpetual delegation. "Let no one perform any of those functions which relate to the Church independently of the Bishop. Let that be esteemed a valid Eucharist, which is ministered under the Bishop, or by some one to whom he gives authority. Wherever the Bishop appears, there let the multitude be, as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. Neither Baptism nor the Eucharist may be ministered independently of the Bishop."<sup>33</sup> The principle which is thus expressed by St. Ignatius, is more fully explained by Tertullian: "The right to confer" Baptism "lies with the High-Priest, that is, the Bishop; then, with Priests and Deacons, yet not without the Bishop's authority, in order to secure to the Church its due honour; the preservation of which is the preservation of peace."<sup>34</sup> This rule, which is attested by various writers,<sup>35</sup> of necessity lodged the whole

<sup>30</sup> S. Ignat. ad Magn. 3.<sup>31</sup> Ad Eph. 1.<sup>32</sup> Ad Trall. 2, 3.<sup>33</sup> S. Ign. ad Smyr. 8.<sup>34</sup> De Baptismo, 17.<sup>35</sup> S. Jerome cont. Lucif. S. Ambros. de Sac. iii. 1.

discipline of the Church in the Bishop, because it left to him the power of granting or withholding all spiritual rights. So was it likewise with the reconciliation of penitents, which lay of right with the Bishop,<sup>36</sup> and with inferior ministers only by his concession. For those powers and privileges which had been bestowed by Christ upon the collective society of His disciples, were understood to have been conferred upon it, in the persons and through the instrumentality of its chiefs. Such had certainly been the case with the original commission of Our Lord, which was bestowed upon the Church at large through the medium of His Apostles. "Our Lord left the keys to Peter, and through him to the Church."<sup>37</sup> "They represented the person of the Church,"<sup>38</sup> and the same, therefore, must have been the position of the Bishops, by whom "they were succeeded, and who governed the Lord's Church by the same power."<sup>39</sup> And so Firmilian expresses it: "The power of remitting sins was given to the Apostles, and to the Churches which they founded when sent forth by Christ, and to the Bishops who have succeeded to their place by ordination."<sup>40</sup>

The principle, then, of the Ancient Church was, that the whole power of government lay in the Bishop. He "represented the Person of Christ," and was "Christ's Vicar,"<sup>41</sup> the Father of the people;<sup>42</sup> there could be no Church without him;<sup>43</sup> to his care the souls of all the people were committed;<sup>44</sup> the charge of Christ's Spouse had been intrusted to him;<sup>45</sup> "all God's people stand on his side;"<sup>46</sup> the very definition of a Church was "a people united to its Bishop;"<sup>47</sup> those who formed congregations in opposition to their Bishop were adjudged heretics.<sup>48</sup> But this power was not derived from arbitrary enactment; it sprung out of that original constitution of the Church, which rendered her an organized body.

<sup>36</sup> S. Cyprian. Ep. xviii. 1, xix. 2; Coun. of Elib. Can. 32.

<sup>37</sup> Tertull. Scorp. 10.

<sup>38</sup> S. Aug. de Baptis. iii. 23.

<sup>39</sup> Id. vii. 84.

<sup>40</sup> S. Cyp. Ep. lxxv. 16.

<sup>41</sup> S. Ambros. in I. Cor. xi. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Papam Cyprianum, &c. Cyp. Ep. viii. 1.

<sup>43</sup> S. Ig. ad Trall. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Apos. Can. xl.

<sup>45</sup> Con. Car. sub. Cyp. Hard. i. p. 171.

<sup>46</sup> S. Ign. ad Philad. 3.

<sup>47</sup> S. Cyp. Ep. lxvi. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Con. Constan. Can. 6. Hard. i. 811.

Its commencement was that commission to bind and loose, from which spiritual authority was inseparable. "Thence flows the ordination of Bishops, and the system of the Church," says St. Cyprian, "through lapse of time and succession, in order that the Church may be built upon Bishops, and its every act may be determined by them as its leaders."<sup>49</sup> Nor was this constitution without those checks, by which its apparent absoluteness might be abated. There was first the habit of consulting both with clergy and people on all matters of moment,<sup>50</sup> and the voice or acquiescence of the people in the appointment of their head.<sup>51</sup> But the main check was drawn from that very source, which gave its weight to the Episcopate—the relation of each Bishop to the general body of his brethren. Though the Bishop's office was the natural expression of Christian unity, and gave utterance to that longing for communion, which led men to unite themselves into a social form, yet its power was derived from its relation to the general body of the Church Universal, and from the fact that the Bishop was the channel, through which the spiritual gifts, which dwelt in the body at large, were dispensed to individuals. Now, this circumstance put a limit upon his power; it made it essential that he should remain in communion with all his brethren; he was exposed to their censure if he did amiss; he was liable to be cut off from them for heresy; and might cease, therefore, to supply that link between his own Church and the body of his brethren, on which the very existence of his office was dependent.

For if the Bishop's position in his own Church was fixed by the fact, that by him alone could spiritual power be transmitted; his position in the Church Catholic was no less fixed by the fact, that it was only from the body of his brethren that spiritual power could be received. As his relation to his subordinate Priesthood grew out of his power of ordination, so did the necessity of consecration link him to the general body, from which his character was derived. The necessity of receiving his commission from his brethren<sup>52</sup> bound him to the same system and faith with them; and thus secured the

<sup>49</sup> Ep. xxxiii. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Id. lv. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Cyp. Ep. xiv. 4.

<sup>52</sup> S. Cyp. Ep. lxvii. 5.

transmission of the rule and order which they had inherited in common. And this relation to the collective body was kept up by various public acts, by which its continuous nature was attested. The most solemn of these was the practice of sending the Holy Eucharist from one Bishop to another, as a sign of intercommunion—a practice which is spoken of as ancient by St. Irenæus.<sup>53</sup> Then came the custom, that a new Bishop announced his accession to his brethren by *communicatory letters*. Such letters are spoken of as in full use by the Council at Antioch<sup>54</sup> in the third century; and their general employment is shown by the remark of a later writer,<sup>55</sup> that to withhold them implied an intention of refusing to communicate. The connexion thus commenced was kept up by letters, written on any occasion of importance, as a means of maintaining oneness of doctrine and discipline. “Inasmuch as the body of the Catholic Church is one,” writes Alexander of Alexandria to his brethren, on the appearance of Arianism, “it is fitting that we should write, and tell one another what happens among each of us.”<sup>56</sup> Such letters were widely diffused (St. Cyprian says “through the whole world,”<sup>57</sup>) and were the means of securing accordance, as the case of Marcion shows, in the exercise of discipline.<sup>58</sup> And thus does St. Optatus speak of the “whole world” as “bound together in the alliance of a single communion by the interchange of communicatory letters.”<sup>59</sup>

Nor was this intercourse by letter reserved for those solemn occasions, when public occurrences required to be communicated. It was a standing part of the ordinary discipline; so that every individual felt his own Bishop to be the channel, through whom he maintained his relation to the Church Universal. For no one, whether lay or clerical, could be admitted to communion at any place which he visited, unless he brought with him commendatory letters:<sup>60</sup> and such letters could only be given by the Bishop of the Diocese.<sup>61</sup> So that if the Bishop lost his place among his

<sup>53</sup> Euseb. v. 24.

<sup>54</sup> Euseb. vii. 30.

<sup>55</sup> Liberati Brev. 17. as cited Bingham, ii. xi. 10.

<sup>56</sup> Socrates i. 6.

<sup>57</sup> Ad Anton. Ep. lv. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Cyp. Ep. xxx. 1.

<sup>59</sup> S. Opt. c. Don. ii. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Apost. Can. 12.

<sup>61</sup> Cod. Eccl. Afric. 106. Con. Ant. Can. 8.

brethren, he separated all his people from the communion of the faithful. But such a contingency was prevented by that right of interference on the part of the body at large, by which any heretical Bishop was liable to exclusion. The most remarkable instance of its exercise in primitive times was in the case of Paul of Samosata. But the principle was of perpetual application: it proceeded on the supposition, that the gift bestowed upon the Apostles, and which had been inherited by their successors, had been given to them as a body; that no Bishop or Bishops could possess it apart from the communion of the whole; that as grace and truth lay in Christ Our Lord, and afterwards in the college of Apostles, so it had been inherited by the whole Episcopate as a trust, in which they had a common share.

This principle is laid down clearly by St. Cyprian: its acceptance and effect is manifest from the weight attached to General Councils. And it shows how the position of individual Bishops, as well as that of the order at large, was dependent on the fact, that the guardianship of doctrine had been committed to it *collectively*. Cyprian was led to speak on the subject by the disputes which arose respecting Novatianism, and which especially distracted the African Church. For though the greatest lights in antiquity arose in that country, yet none was more troubled by differences in regard to discipline. "The Episcopate," he says, "is a single trust, administered collectively by many individuals."<sup>62</sup> He does not mean that it is divided into many parts, each of which has been assigned to a separate individual; but that it remains undivided as a common trust, for which many individuals are respectively accountable. "For though we are many pastors," he says, "we feed one flock;"<sup>63</sup> and "we all of us ought to watch for the body of the whole Church, the members whereof are divided through every different province."<sup>64</sup> And again: "As Christ has divided His one Church throughout the whole world into many members, so is there one Episcopate, which is extended through the accordant multiplicity of many Bishops."<sup>65</sup> The same state-

<sup>62</sup> "Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur."—*De Unitate*, p. 180.

<sup>63</sup> Ep. lxviii. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Ep. xxxvi. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Ep. lv. 20.



ment occurs in the Apostolical Constitutions, where the Apostles are represented as writing "for the confirmation of you who are put in trust with the *universal* Episcopate;"<sup>66</sup> and it accords with the assertion of St. Ignatius, that "the Bishops who are appointed for all the ends of the earth," are the expression of "the mind of Christ Jesus."<sup>67</sup>

Since the Episcopate, then, was a trust, which was held by many collectively, it followed that to depart from the federal union was to lose all claim on this common trust. "He who separates himself from the bond of the Church, and from the Sacerdotal College, can neither have the power nor honour of a Bishop, since he has chosen not to retain the unity and peace of the Episcopate."<sup>68</sup> Such a person "cannot retain his Episcopate, even though he has been made a Bishop," because he "secedes from the body of his brother Bishops, and from the unity of the Church;"<sup>69</sup> by "not holding the unity of the Church," he "is put out of the body, and can have no ecclesiastical authority."<sup>70</sup> The "Divine Scripture teaches that the Church cannot be rent in parts or divided; it maintains the unity of an indivisible and individual house."<sup>71</sup> For its unity has its cause and exemplar in the unity of the Divine Nature.<sup>72</sup> St. Cyprian shows us further, how this necessity of accordance throughout the whole Episcopate, and this responsibility of each for the acts of all, led to the maintenance of the true faith throughout the world. "The wide body of Bishops," he writes to St. Stephen, "is kept together by the adhesion and bond of a mutual concord and unity, that if any one of our college should attempt to introduce heresy, and to rend and waste the flock of Christ, the others may come to the rescue, and like helpful and kind shepherds may gather the Lord's sheep into His flock."<sup>73</sup> Such instances of interference, both in defence of truth, and in confutation of error, occur constantly in early times. They followed from the principle that no Bishop could be appointed without the

<sup>66</sup> 66. vi. 14.      <sup>67</sup> οἱ ἐπίσκοποι οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὀρισθέντες.—*Ad Eph.* 3.

<sup>68</sup> Cyp. ad Anton. Ep. lv. 20.

<sup>69</sup> Id.

<sup>70</sup> Foris fiat necesse est nec habeat ecclesiasticam ordinationem.—*Id. Ep.* lv. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Cyp. ad Magnum. lxi. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Id. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Ep. lxviii. 3.

concurrence of the whole existing body, and, therefore, that its collective power was exercised individually by each of its members. Thus Cornelius, of Rome, had been appointed "by the testimony of his brother Bishops, whose whole number throughout the world agreed with one accord."<sup>74</sup> And the trust thus imparted was in its nature co-extensive with the whole Church, however limited might be the sphere in which its possessor was called to execute it; as Nazianzen<sup>75</sup> observes, that St. Cyprian was not Bishop only of Carthage or Africa, but that his authority spread as widely as the Christian name. And Symmachus illustrates its principle by the highest of all comparisons: "as in the Blessed Trinity there is one undivided power, so have various Bishops a single priesthood."<sup>76</sup>

The view which has been taken of the nature and origin of Episcopal authority may be confirmed by two circumstances in early Church History: first, the nature and origin of Councils; secondly, the arguments employed against the Donatists. It may surprise those who expect every part of the Gospel scheme to be authorized by some direct texts of Scripture, that an institution which has exercised so much influence as the Councils of the Church, should be wholly unnoticed there; except so far as it derives incidental sanction from the assembly of the Apostles at Jerusalem. But this is no difficulty to those who suppose that the teaching of Scripture was given as it was required, and, therefore, that the statement of certain general principles was all which in such a case could be expected. For the existence and influence of Councils resulted naturally from the principle, that the Bishop was the connecting link between his own Church and the Church Catholic; and the means, therefore, whereby those gifts, which are promised to the Church, as a whole, may become available for the guidance of each individual. To collect the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists into a single volume showed a belief that their teaching was designed to form a

<sup>74</sup> Ep. lv. 7.

<sup>75</sup> Orat. 18, vol. i. p. 281. [Paris, 1630.]

<sup>76</sup> Ad Trinitatis instar, cujus, una est atque individua potestas, unum per diversos Antistites sacerdotium.—*P. Symmach. ad Æon. Arelat. in Baronius A. D. 499. n. 36.*

whole, and to set forth a system of connected doctrines ; and the same belief that they formed a whole, and had a certain collective character, was exhibited by the Church's rulers, when they combined themselves into a body, and gave united decisions respecting the faith.

Such assemblies of Bishops appear to have been held from the very earliest times. Tertullian speaks of Church assemblies, which he calls a "representation of the whole Christian name,"<sup>77</sup> as peculiarly prevalent in Greece, and he refers to such assemblages, as having fixed the Canon of Scripture ;<sup>78</sup> but the discussions respecting the keeping of Easter<sup>79</sup> show them to have been in existence at a still earlier period, and as soon as the first half of the second century. Indeed they were a necessary consequence of the Apostolical succession ; for as the Episcopal office was perpetuated by the assembling of Bishops to consecrate, and as it was a special condition of this act that "the things heard" should be committed "to faithful men who" might "teach others also"—therefore, meetings or *Synods* of Bishops must have been held from the first, and to maintain true doctrine must always have been understood to be their purpose. Such a connexion between the meeting of a Synod, and the consecration of a new Bishop, is recognized by the Council of Antioch.<sup>80</sup> Now, since the operation of Councils arose in this way from the constitution of the Church, and was not prescribed by any positive law, they would naturally grow up without that definition of their nature and rights, which is essential to such powers as depend merely on positive enactment. The American Congress and Courts have definite rights, which are limited by precise rules, because they depend upon a written constitution : but the authority of the British Parliament has grown insensibly out of the Anglo-Saxon principle, that taxes are not to be levied without the consent of the nation. In like manner, the authority of Councils is an acted commentary upon the fact, that the Apostles left their power to the body of Bishops as a common trust ; and the very absence of any external enactment, coupled with the circumstance that such

<sup>77</sup> De Jejuniis. 13.<sup>78</sup> De Pudic. 10.<sup>79</sup> Euseb. v. 23.<sup>80</sup> Can. 19, Hard. i. 602.

was the shape into which the Church's institutions everywhere grew, shows that this principle was an organic law of her existence.

For there are three points to be observed respecting Councils: first, that their decisions depended on the votes of the Episcopal order; next, that they were possessed of a living power, through the presence of the Holy Ghost, who was believed to dwell in them; thirdly, that their authority varied as they represented a smaller or greater part of the Bishops of the Church, and was not final, unless it had the concurrence of the whole body. Now, these principles evidently imply, that the interpretation of doctrine was lodged as a perpetual trust in the Episcopate, but that the exercise of this function implied the co-operation of all Bishops as a collective whole.

That the decision in Councils was given by the Bishops, we know from the testimony of St. Cyprian.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, how could it have been otherwise, since it was only through them that there was anything like a *representation* of different Churches. The Presbyters and the Laity of the vicinage may have been present, as was certainly the case when each Bishop assembled his own Diocese,<sup>82</sup> but what right had they to settle matters, which required the consent of all their brethren? Such a power would have implied a representation of each class, as it exists at present in America; but of this the Primitive Church presents not a vestige. The Bishops, therefore, who formed the principle of coherence, were the persons by whom different Churches were naturally represented; they may have listened to the argument of others, as of Malchion at Antioch, and of Athanasius at Nice, but the decision lay with themselves. This was maintained even when the Emperors entered the Church, a circumstance which evidently involved the utmost danger to her independence. Constantine formally conceded the decision of doctrine to the Bishops at Nice, and so did the officers of Marcion, at Chalcedon. "When did you ever hear, most Gracious Emperor," writes St. Ambrose, "that laymen have judged a Bishop in a matter of faith? Are we so debased by flattery, as to be

<sup>81</sup> Cyp. Anton. Ep. lv. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Id. xxx. 6.

unmindful of our priestly rights; and that what God has committed to me, I should suppose ought to be intrusted to others? If a Bishop ought to be taught by a layman, what will follow? Then let a layman expound, and the Bishop hear; let the Bishop learn from a layman. But, surely, whether we look back to the Sacred Writings or to ancient times, who is there that can deny, that in a matter of faith, I repeat, in a matter of faith, Christian Emperors ought to be judged by Bishops, and not Bishops by Emperors."<sup>83</sup>

It was not till a comparatively late period, therefore, that the Conciliar acts were ever attested by laymen; or even by Presbyters except as representatives of their Bishops; and this lay attestation, when it was introduced, only gave a temporal sanction to that which had been decided by the proper spiritual authority. But that the decision of doctrinal questions lay entirely with the Bishops in Primitive times, is absolutely certain. And their office on such occasions was not merely that of witnessing what had been done or said in their Churches in times past, but also that of meeting those new difficulties in faith or practice, which successively arose, by new decisions. Not that Bishops in Council have any claim to supernatural guidance, which is not bestowed upon Bishops at large. Our Lord's promise, that when two or three are gathered together, He will be in the midst of them, no doubt sets forth a principle; but it would apply as well to the conference of a few friends, antecedent to a Council, as to the more formal discussions of the Council itself. The faith of Bishops grew like that of other men, out of the hereditary system in which they were educated, aided by their own study of Scripture, and of the arguments of their contemporaries. Thus furnished, they came together, and gave judgment according to the convictions by which they were severally possessed. It made little difference, therefore, whether they staid at home, and communicated their opinions by writing, or met together and explained their sentiments *vivâ voce*. So that the judgment of the Church *diffusive* was no less binding (as was shown in the condemnation of the Pelagian heresy,) than that of the Church *collective*. But the proceedings of Councils

<sup>83</sup> Epist. Class. 1. 21. 4. vol. ii. p. 861. The same thing is expressed by Valentinian.—*Sozom.* vi. 7.



are important, as showing the nature of that authority, with which the Episcopal order was supposed to be invested, as proving it to be a living power of interpretation, capable of grappling with new questions, and requiring to be listened to in matters of faith.

The Church's mode of acting in such cases, and the use and authority of her decisions, may be illustrated by the conduct of those whose standard is private judgment. For private judgment is just as much a living principle, and gives judgment as peremptorily respecting truth or falsehood, as do the Church's rulers—the only difference is, that in the former case the reference is to human reason, in the latter to divine grace. Every commentator on Scripture gives that turn to its sacred words, which suits the general theory with which he associates it: and his interpretations seem natural or strained, according as his readers partake or not of the same prepossessions. Is it not notorious that Anglican Commentaries are approved in England, and Romish on the Continent: that the Laudian school is read by Churchmen, and the Puritan by Dissenters? Whence can this be, but that each man's private judgment is the ultimate judge to which these various shapes of the one original Revelation are submitted? Some will say, indeed, that the guide ought not to be private reason, but that spiritual illumination, which may be hoped for by individuals as well as by Churches. But individuals cannot allege any promise of guidance, except that which is made to all men who read Scripture, with prayer for direction. Unless men are self-sufficient enough, then, to assert that they are themselves inspired, while all others are in darkness, they must either suppose that the Holy Ghost leads different students to irreconcilable conclusions—a thing contrary to His office of guiding into all truth—or they must allow, that so long as there are contrarieties of opinion, no individual can be sure that his conclusions stand on a higher basis than his private reason. And the ground on which the Church as a body claims that illumination, to which individuals cannot pretend without arrogance, is because she has that specific promise of guidance, of which they are not possessed.

Such being the condition of the two parties, it is manifest, however, in practice, that those who go by private judgment, acknowledge a present authority as well as the others. For common consent—the opinion of mankind at large—is as real a standard of appeal as Church-authority. The only difference is, that it rests upon the principles of nature, not on those of grace. And it likewise has its councils, by which at different times and in different degrees it expresses its mind; but which are only an expedient for gaining an utterance of that popular will, which has its root in the accordance of mankind. For what are Parliaments, or Scientific Societies, but councils which express the collective judgment, respecting either the social relations of men, or philosophical truth? The individuals, of whom such bodies are constituted, make up their minds either previously or in concert; they think, study, converse, and the common decision embodies their collective conclusions, and shows the living action of the public judgment. And the judgments thus given are accepted by the world at large, with more or less of obedience, just as the decisions of Councils by the Church's children, although it is felt in each case that no local assembly can claim to speak in behalf of all mankind. Yet such exponents of the collective reason, exert a practical influence over the generality of men. One man's private judgment might lead him to say that murder was not a crime, as another's to deny the Copernican system; but would not the first be put down by law, and the second by ridicule?

To assert, then, that Councils have a living power, and apply new remedies to each emergent difficulty, is to attribute to their members that peculiar authority, which belongs to them through the promises and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. That which reason does for the natural Societies of men, is done for the Church Catholic by grace. Its authorities, therefore, employ all those resources of mind which God has given, whether individually or in concert, whether by thought or study; but they do so in dependence on the unfailing promise that they shall be led into all truth. And that such has been their conviction is evident from their conduct. The Bishops who have assembled have always acted as if the

Christian system was a connected body of truth, which those of their order had an especial commission to interpret: they have accepted every previous statement which has been made by the whole body of their predecessors, as believing that it must stand on a super-human authority; such statements as have been either partial in their authority, or incomplete in their expression, they have thought themselves at liberty to re-open, and determine. This is plainly the conduct of a living body, which supposes itself to have power to deal with every issue which events may bring up. "Local and Provincial Councils," says St. Augustin, "must yield clearly to the authority of plenary Councils of the whole Christian world; and even as respects plenary Councils themselves, earlier ones are often improved upon by later, when experience lays open that which was hidden, and makes known that which was concealed."<sup>84</sup> Thus the term, "Homoousion," which had been proscribed by the local Council at Antioch, A.D. 264, was approved by the General Council at Nice, 61 years later; and again, the General Council at Ephesus ordered that no alteration should take place in the Creed; yet the Symbol of St. Athanasius<sup>85</sup> in effect embodied that which was agreed upon at Chalcedon. For this restriction was not meant to prevent the Church from adding those new cautions which the Holy Ghost might teach her to be essential, but merely to fix the authority of that which had already been ascertained.

But the relation of Councils to the Church's judgment is rendered still more manifest, as we proceed to the third point, *i. e.* that their authority was held conclusive just in proportion as they approached that condition of universality, which identified their decision with that of the whole Episcopate. Thus do they witness to St. Cyprian's principle, that the authority which had been possessed by the Apostles, had been bequeathed to the collective body of Bishops. The gift which had dwelt personally in Our Lord, and had been transmitted to the college of Apostles, was handed on, as a com-

<sup>84</sup> De Baptism. c. Don. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Even if this Creed was composed before 430, as Waterland maintains, yet it contains additions to the Nicene Creed.

mon trust, to their successors throughout the world. It resided in each Bishop, but only while he held his place in the rank, and was in communion with his brethren. And, therefore, a Council of the whole Church was of necessity conclusive, because its acts were equivalent to the decision of the Bishops as a body. And exactly in proportion as this end was attained, was the decision of a Council authoritative. Thus, St. Cyprian, anticipating that an African Council might not suffice in the case of the lapsed, wrote, he says, to the Bishop of Rome, who laid the matter before a larger Council.<sup>86</sup> For even General Councils received their sanction not merely from the sentence of those Bishops who were present, but from the understood concurrence of those who were absent. The Council of Nice itself contained but a few Western Bishops; the assent of the rest was involved in that of the Bishop of Rome, with whom they were known to harmonize. On the other hand, the Council of Ariminum was meant to be general, but the heresy which its members were beguiled into tolerating, was never accepted by the rest of the Episcopate. So that the whole authority of such decisions, and the final acceptance, which is due to that which St. Augustin describes as a *plenary* Council, arises out of the original law, which lodges the decision of doctrine in the Episcopate at large. And the system of Councils was only the form, into which the Church's organization resolved itself.

Again: The effect of this law was exhibited in a very remarkable manner, in the history of the Donatists. They afford an example, not unhappily without parallel, that a personal quarrel may grow into a heresy. The ground of difference had been a dispute respecting the appointment of a Bishop at Carthage, in which the larger part of the Bishops of Africa had come to be on one side, and the Church Catholic on the other. The division arose insensibly. When Secundus, of Tigisi, Primate of the adjoining Province of Numidia, and the seventy Bishops who assembled with him in Council at Carthage, A. D. 311, declared Cæcilianus to be unduly elected, and notified to the rest of Africa that they had appointed Majorinus in his room, they had no reason to suppose that

<sup>86</sup> Plurimi coepiscopi. Cyp. Anton. lv. 5.



their decision would not be generally accepted. Roman Africa was a district as big again as France; according to Bingham's<sup>87</sup> calculation, it contained six Provinces, and 466 Bishops, who were able to settle their ordinary affairs among themselves. The supporters of Majorinus seem, at first, to have taken it for granted that so it would be: when they addressed Constantine, their application purported to be "the petition of the Catholic Church,"<sup>88</sup> and at a later period some of their party speak of the views of Donatus, as though accepted "by nearly the whole world."<sup>89</sup> In neither of these cases does there seem to have been any reference to parties out of Africa. Perhaps the dispute might have been settled among themselves, had it not been for the appeal which the Donatists made to the civil power. Constantine, indeed, decided against them, A. D. 316; as Melchiades, the Bishop of Rome, and the Council of Arles (both of whom had previously heard the cause at his request,) had already done. The Donatist party, however, persevered, notwithstanding it now became manifest that the rest of Christendom held them to be in the wrong; party-spirit kept them together, and fortified them against the opinion of what they called the Transmarine Churches. The consequence was, that all foreign Bishops withheld those letters,<sup>90</sup> by which intercommunion was indicated, so that they were practically cut off from the fellowship of the Catholic Church. For a considerable time they seem to have taken no notice of this loss, and St. Optatus, who wrote against them about sixty years after the schism, speaks of them as still offering up prayers for "the one Church, which is scattered throughout the whole world."<sup>91</sup> By this time, however, they found it necessary to explain their position; and many of them, as Tichonius,<sup>92</sup> one of their number, records "with pain," defended themselves by "speaking slightly of Christ's kingdom." They denied Tichonius's assertion, that the prophecies proved that Christ's Body

<sup>87</sup> Ant. ix. II. 6.    <sup>88</sup> St. Aug. Ep. lxxxviii. 2.    <sup>89</sup> St. Aug. in Cresc. iii. 62.

<sup>90</sup> St. Augustin explains what happened, when observing what they should have guarded against: they should have perceived that the foreign Church, which, of course, could only communicate with one Bishop in any place, would preserve the connexion which it already had with Cæcilian.—*Ep.* xliii. 8.

<sup>91</sup> ii. 12.

<sup>92</sup> De Regulis. i. Bib. Pat. vi. 50.



would extend throughout the world, and affirmed it to exist merely among themselves. "Parmenianus, and the other Donatists," says St. Augustin, "saw this to be a necessary consequence, and chose rather to harden their minds against that obvious truth, which Tichonius affirmed, than through this concession to yield to those African Churches, which communicated with that Unity which Tichonius vindicated, and from which they had separated."<sup>93</sup>

For this decision respecting the rest of the Church, it was necessary to find a reason; and such a reason was found in the lax state of discipline which was alleged to prevail. The original charge against Cæcilianus had been, that his consecrators had lapsed during the Dioclesian persecution; and it had become an article of their belief, that to tolerate offenders was fatal to the life of the Church. Parmenianus<sup>94</sup> and his partizans maintained that on this account the whole Church had fallen away except the Donatist body. And their alienation was increased by a custom which had long distinguished Africa from the residue of the West—that of re-baptizing those who had been baptized in heresy. For since they had settled, that all the rest of Christendom had lapsed into heresy, they were compelled, of course, to re-baptize all strangers who joined them from any other country. And whereas all the rest of the Christian world was held together by the bond of one communion, their revenge for exclusion from this common intercourse, was to treat all the rest of the world as heathen.

Now, what were the arguments employed against them by the Catholic advocates, and especially by St. Augustin? He adduced every consideration which Scripture or reason could suggest, whether to affect the body at large, or to win over individuals; and tried to disentangle the original dispute from the complications which had been produced either by private passion, or by the interference of the civil government. But his main topic, on which he always falls back, is, that the Donatists could not be in the right, because they were cut off from that common body of the Church Catholic which inherited the promises. "O senseless perversity of man," he

<sup>93</sup> Con. Armen. i. 1.<sup>94</sup> Id. i. 4.

exclaims, "you suppose yourself to be praised for believing about Christ that which you do not see; and you do not suppose you will be condemned for denying respecting His Church that which you do see; although the Head is in Heaven, and the Body upon earth!"<sup>95</sup> "As we do not believe," say the Catholic Bishops at the Conference at Carthage, "that Christ's dead Body was lost from the tomb through any theft, so neither ought we to believe that through any sin His living members have perished from the world. Since Christ, then, is the Head, and the Church His Body, it is easy to find Scriptural authority which at once defends the Head against the calumnies of Jews, and the Body against the accusations of heretics."<sup>96</sup>

The great argument, then, employed against the Donatists was, that the continued existence of Christ's Body Mystical was as clearly revealed as the reality of His Body Natural; that to deny the endurance of the one, was as fatal to men's salvation as to deny the assumption of the other; that "He was born of the Virgin Mary" was not a more essential article of the Creed than "One Holy Catholic Church." Now, the conclusions to which this argument leads, and the principles on which it is built, are exactly those which have been set forth in this chapter as characteristic of the system of the Gospel. For it implies that the whole Episcopate was one body, which must needs act in concert; and it leads to the conclusion, that this one body must of necessity be the judge in matters of faith. This may be seen from every argument to which the question gave occasion. There were naturally some among the Donatists who excused themselves by shutting their eyes to their exact position. Such was Fortunius, Bishop of Tubursica, of whose personal character St. Augustin speaks highly, though he never suppresses his conviction, that the state of schism in which the Donatists lived, was an impediment to their salvation, for which no personal piety could compensate. When St. Augustin, then, pressed Fortunius with the usual arguments, he replied that he was in communion with the Church throughout the world.

<sup>95</sup> Con. Cresc. iii. 71.

<sup>96</sup> Gest. Coll. Carth. i. 16. Gallandi, v. p. 592.

St. Augustin's answer shows what was the practical test of the Church's unity, and proves how completely it depended upon that connexion between the whole body of Bishops, through which each individual Christian retained his relation to the Catholic Church. "I inquired," he says, "whether he could give communicatory letters, which we call *Litteræ Formatae*, to any place to which I desired him, and I affirmed, which was evident to all, that this was the readiest way of trying that question."<sup>97</sup> Fortunius, of course, shrunk from the trial; for the very circumstance which had separated the Donatists from the Church Catholic, and had compelled them in their turn to deny its existence, was, that the rest of the Episcopate had withheld such letters, and, of course, would refuse to accept them.

But there were other Donatists who were too consistent to lay claim to any communion, virtual or otherwise, throughout the world; and who justified their isolation either by their right of succession in their own Sees, by the great preponderance which they had in their own Province, or by the purity of their doctrine and sacraments. The two first arguments seem to have been mainly depended upon at the Conference at Carthage; the Donatist Bishops were careful to display their numbers, which in the Province of Numidia were allowed to exceed that of the Catholics;<sup>98</sup> they insisted that each Bishop should show his right to his See, and prove the validity of his spiritual descent;<sup>99</sup> and maintained that it must be settled by such considerations as these, which party had a right to the title of Catholic.<sup>100</sup> At other times, and especially by the smaller parties, which split off from the main body of the Donatists, the purity of manners and doctrine was principally insisted on; those were rightly to be called Catholics, "who observed all the divine precepts, and all the sacraments;" "in them alone would the Son of Man find faith at His return."<sup>101</sup>

Now, the answer given to these arguments shows how

<sup>97</sup> Epis. xlv. 3.

<sup>98</sup> I. 18, Gall. v. p. 593.

<sup>99</sup> Unde cæpisti? Quem habes patrem, &c.—*Id.* iii. 229, p. 653; iii. 236. p. 654; and i. 65, p. 600.

<sup>100</sup> *Id.* iii. 93, 99, p. 643, 644.

<sup>101</sup> St. Aug. Ep. xciii. 23 and 49.

entirely the witness to truth was supposed to depend upon the decision of the collective body. The title of Catholic, St. Augustin said, was not meant to express an opinion, but a fact;<sup>102</sup> it merely indicated what was that body, which was known to exist throughout the world; if to attribute it was to admit the powers of the body which was thus described, it was only because the predictions of Scripture had declared this condition to be essential to their exercise. The number of the Donatist Bishops, and their right to their individual Sees, was met again by the fact, that at most they made but one Province, and that no single Province could claim to be that Body of Christ, which was spread throughout the world. "As we do not listen to those enemies of Christ, who say that His Body was stolen from the tomb by His Disciples, so neither ought we to listen to those enemies of His Church, who say that it has no existence, save among the Africans alone, and their few associates."<sup>103</sup> And, finally, their assertion of the necessity of a pure communion was overthrown by the consideration, that in such matters there could be no certain judge except the Church Catholic. "The collective body," says St. Augustin, "judges with certainty, that those cannot be good men, wherever they may be, who separate themselves from the collective body."<sup>104</sup>

St. Augustin explains the principle, on which all these arguments are founded, in a letter, in which he states what ought to have been the conduct of Secundus, and the other Bishops, by whom Cæcilianus had been deposed. They should have remembered, he says, that they were not judging merely a Priest, or a Deacon, respecting whom, as was shown in the instance of Apiarius, the Provincial Council of Africa had a right to decide without appeal, but a Bishop, who "might reserve his cause to be heard by the judgment of his colleagues, and especially of the Apostolical Churches." Their course should have been, therefore, "to go to their brethren and colleagues, the Bishops beyond the sea," that having ob-

<sup>102</sup> Cont. Pet. ii. 91.

<sup>103</sup> Gest. Coll. Cart. i. 18; Gall. v. 592.

<sup>104</sup> *Securus judicat orbis terrarum, bonos non esse qui se dividunt ab orbe terrarum in quacunque parte terrarum.*—*Con. Parmen.* iii. 24.



tained their concurrence "they might safely ordain another Bishop for the people of Carthage, when the opponent was cut off by the whole Church."<sup>105</sup> The same principle is apparent in the mode of argument which he employed against re-baptism. This had been a peculiarity of long standing in the African Church, having been introduced, as it would seem, early in the third century. It is one of the charges of Hippolytus<sup>106</sup> against Callistus, that this practice was introduced among the members of his communion, while he was Bishop of Rome, and then probably was held the Council<sup>107</sup> at Carthage, in which Agrippinus presided, at which re-baptism was first authorized. Subsequently, it gave rise to the contention between St. Cyprian and St. Stephen. The last threatened to separate its abettors from his communion; but it would seem from St. Augustin's mode of speaking, that the threat was not carried into execution. For he makes it a matter of great praise to St. Cyprian, that there was no actual separation,<sup>108</sup> and contrasts his case with those in which there had been a real disruption. But why give such praise to St. Cyprian, since either St. Stephen had no right to require the change, or it should not have been refused by St. Cyprian? Now, St. Augustin cannot have thought the first, or he would censure St. Stephen, which he does not: yet why praise St. Cyprian, who, though he made no separation, yet persevered in practising re-baptism? The reason would seem to be the peculiar nature of the dispute. St. Cyprian was anxious to shut a door, by which, as he thought, unfit persons entered the Church. St. Stephen insisted that the door should be left open. Now, so long as the whole Church remained in communion together, the party which took the milder view, and allowed men to enter the Church from heresy without re-baptism, gained its point. Though St. Stephen, therefore, refrained from taking the steps he threatened, yet so long

<sup>105</sup> Epis. xliii. 7, 8.

<sup>106</sup> *Philosophumena* ix. 12, p. 291. The statement that it happened in the time of Callistus, while it is not implied that he was concerned in it, would imply, as Döllinger observes, that the thing complained of did not take place at Rome.—*Hippolytus and Callistus*, p. 190.

<sup>107</sup> St. Cyp. Ep. lxxi. 4. St. Aug. de Bap. ii. 12.

<sup>108</sup> De Bapt. c. Pet. 23. De Baptismo, v. 36.



as St. Cyprian remained in communion with the Church of Rome, he was compelled to communicate with those who entered it in the manner to which he objected. His only mode of guarding against this, would have been by severing his connexion with that part of the Church, in which this door was still kept open. So that St. Stephen gained his point by sitting still: while the same course in St. Cyprian was to allow himself to be defeated. And, therefore, St. Augustin might at once approve the one for what he required, and yet praise the other for what he practically conceded.

St. Cyprian, however, continued to re-baptize heretics himself, and thereby gave the weight of his own example to the side of the Donatists. And nothing shows more clearly that the Church was regarded as a living whole, endowed with power to act and decide respecting any new case which presented itself, and likewise that this power was supposed to reside in the whole collective Episcopate, and not in any individual, however high his personal character, or in any province, however extended, than St. Augustin's remarks on St. Cyprian's conduct. He neither attempts to detract from St. Cyprian's authority, nor does he deny that his decision was adverse to his own. He allows that St. Cyprian and the Bishops of Africa supposed themselves to have authority from Holy Scripture for adopting this course. But since their time, he says, a plenary Council had settled the matter otherwise; and had thus overruled the decision of the African Province by that of the collective Church. The Council to which he refers appears to be that of Arles,<sup>109</sup> A. D. 314, which, though consisting only of the representatives of the Western Churches, had yet been generally received, and which had requested Pope Sylvester<sup>110</sup> to communicate its directions, and among them its prohibition of this African usage of re-baptism, to the rest of their brethren. St. Augustin's complaint against the Donatists, therefore, was not grounded on the nature of this act, which in St. Cyprian he thought a pardonable error, but on the rejection of the authority by which it was prohibited. Their fault was their adherence to the practice of a single Province, now that it was forbidden by the Collective Church;

<sup>109</sup> Vid. note to De Bapt. ii. 14.

<sup>110</sup> Harduin. i. 262.

“whereas, that which has been decided by the appointment of the Universal Church ought to be preferred to the authority of a single Bishop, or to the Council of a single Province.”<sup>111</sup> For himself, he says, that he did not suppose himself better than St. Cyprian, because he “saw something which the latter did not see; because the Church had not yet a plenary Council concerning this subject.”<sup>112</sup> The Scriptural argument, he maintains, is on our side, “because we do that, which has been approved by that Church Universal, which the authority of the same Scripture commends to us.”<sup>113</sup> Finally, he discriminates in a single sentence between St. Cyprian, who acted erroneously before the Church had given its judgment, and the Donatists, who persisted in the same error against the judgment of the Church. “To express my mind briefly on this subject, I think, that to re-baptize heretics, as the former is said to have done, was then an act of human frailty, but that to re-baptize Catholics, as the latter do at present, is always a diabolical presumption.”<sup>114</sup>

The history of the Donatists, then, like the Church's practice of assembling in Councils, confirms the general principle which has been laid down respecting the authority of the Church. This authority was supposed to reside in the collective body of Bishops, as inheriting that gift of spiritual discernment, which had dwelt originally in the Person of Our Lord, and had been bestowed upon the Apostles. The gift, therefore, was bestowed upon them in common, and could only be exercised by each, as the representative of all. But because the Gospel Kingdom was designed to interpenetrate all kingdoms of the earth without destroying them, therefore this principle was not set forth in any formal charter, which might be mistaken for a declaration of hostility against all existing legislatures, but it was embodied in the constitution and nature of the Church itself. Since each Bishop was the centre of all spiritual power to his own flock, and also the channel through which each individual communicated with the Universal Church; since all grace was communicated through him to individuals, while it was received by himself

<sup>111</sup> De Baptis. ii. 2, and iii. 2.

<sup>112</sup> De Baptis. iv. 8.

<sup>113</sup> Con. Cresc. i. 39.

<sup>114</sup> De Bap. c. Petil. 22.

through the communion of his brethren, it followed, of necessity, that the decision of doctrine must lie in the Bishop, while each Bishop could decide nothing save with the concurrence of his colleagues. In its practical office of conveying the forgiveness of sins, the Church, as a body, must needs go together. "The unity of the Church remits sins or retains them."<sup>115</sup> So that if this unity were broken the commission would cease, and Christ's promise of perpetual presence with His ministers would be forfeited. But that such would never be the case was the confident belief of the early Fathers, which they grounded upon the promises of Scripture, and the immutability of God. That the light might suffer partial obscuration was possible, but not such eclipse as would destroy its lustre and vitiate its office.

Thus, there were organs provided by which the Church's work was to be performed. For if the Church be really meant to exercise authority, there must be some media through which its authority is to be exerted. And such were those united successors of the Apostles, through whom the Body Mystical of Christ went forth "conquering and to conquer." That "a man shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment," was the prophetic prediction respecting the Church's founder, and His first disciples. But the Spirit of wisdom and grace must needs outlast the "earthen vessels" of those favoured Twelve, to whom it was first intrusted. The Church must have its succession; the Apostles their spiritual descendants. And such were the Bishops throughout the world; the Church's sons, who in their turn became her sires. Through their labours were the mysteries of the Catholic Faith unfolded, and the order of its discipline extended throughout the world. "Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went, for the Spirit of the Living Creature was in" them. And "instead of thy fathers, thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands."

<sup>115</sup> "Unitas tenet, unitas dimittit."—*S. Aug. De Bap.* iii. 23.

## CHAPTER V.

## A HIERARCHY NECESSARY TO THE ACTION OF THE COLLECTIVE EPISCOPATE.

THE Church, then, is an organized body, guided by that Gracious Spirit, who has vouchsafed to make it His dwelling, because it is the Body of Christ. Thus has the blessing, which was bestowed upon the Head, been extended to the members. And the means provided for the communication of this gift is the collective Episcopate. The Bishops, considered as a whole, are the heirs of that promise which was bestowed upon the College of Apostles. They still possess that power and presence, which Our Lord insured to His first disciples, when He declared, "as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Through their ministry the Apostles still "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And this office will they continue to discharge till Christ returns with the company of His Saints, and the Regeneration has its completion in the judgment of the world.

But the last Chapter has shown that it is essential to the exercise of their office, that they should be in unity with one another. Every Bishop is a Bishop of the whole Church, for each represents Christ, and is the means whereby His members are united to the Body. Now, since the Church is one, having one Head, one Spirit, and one doctrine, it is impossible that their trust should be discharged, except they are in concord with one another. For how can they profess to dis-

pense the Spirit of love, if they are themselves at variance? How can they witness to the one Truth, if their testimony is contradictory? No doubt there must arise bad men and bad Bishops; but it is the condition of their office, that in public matters they must agree together; they derive an authority from one another; so that he who is separated from the communion of his brethren, gives up thereby his own claim to teach. St. Augustin<sup>1</sup> refers often to the confession of his predecessor St. Cyprian, that the Church in his day, and even the Episcopate, was disgraced by the existence of unworthy members; but neither of them considered this circumstance to interfere with its claim to teach; whereas both asserted that such persons as separated from the one communion, lost thereby as well their privilege as private Christians, as their claim to teach as successors of the Apostles.

But if it is necessary that all Bishops should agree, some means must have been taken for securing their agreement. We may use the same argument as in the last Chapter; if the Church was designed to teach, there must be an arrangement for her teaching; if it is essential that her teachers should accord, there must be a provision for their accordance. Now, while the Apostles themselves continued upon earth, such a result might easily be effected. There was a supernatural provision for their union; but its maintenance, humanly speaking, was not a hard task. Their number was small; they continued long in the same place, or at least the same country; they were united by habits, language, and race. Add, that they were each guided by that one Divine Spirit, by whom every one of them was led "into all truth." Now, since truth is one, and God's Spirit is the Spirit of concord, how could those twelve brethren "fall out by the way," seeing that each of them was supernaturally directed by the Holy Ghost? But something more was needed, when the successors of the Twelve increased to a great host, and spread themselves through every land. The Children of Israel had elders of their own, even when they lived in Egypt under a foreign government; they clung together as one people in

<sup>1</sup> De Baptismo, c. Don. iii. 22; iv. 3.



the midst of strangers:<sup>2</sup> and what in like manner was the Church's government, while as yet its existence as a separate kingdom was not understood by the nations of the earth?

The last Chapter has shown that the government of the Church lay with its Bishops: each Bishop possessed authority in his own diocese, and was the channel through which his people held communion with the Body of Christ throughout the world. But was it not possible that disputes should arise among Bishops; might they not administer discipline on different principles, or hand down a different doctrine? No one, it was said, might be received into communion in any place which he visited, without the sanction of the Bishop, in whose diocese he had his abode—as was witnessed by the story of Marcion. But what remedy was there if this obligation should be violated? Had there been no risk of its violation, it would hardly have been enforced so strongly as it is by the 31st and 32nd Canons (so called) of the Apostles.<sup>3</sup> And again: Should such differences ever arise, they were sure to be accompanied by disputes as to the appointment of Bishops. That disputes did in fact take place respecting the appointment of Bishops is but too manifest; though they did not always lead to such serious consequences, as when Meletius was consecrated at Antioch, or Majorinus at Carthage. But suppose such disputes to arise, how were they to be settled? The ordinary mode of appointment<sup>4</sup> was, that the neighbouring Bishops assembled, and with the concurrence of the clergy and laity of the place, consecrated some one to the vacant office. Suppose, then, that two parties existed in any city, and that each, as was likely, had its favourites among the adjoining Bishops—was the election to rest with those who got the start, or might not each, in fact, proceed simultaneously? Disputes it is clear could not be avoided, unless some system prevailed, by which such difficulties might be averted.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. iv. 29.

<sup>3</sup> These Canons formed part, no doubt, of the code of the early Church. They are quoted in the order given by Bruns, *Canones Apostolorum* et Concil. Berlin, 1839.

<sup>4</sup> Vide Beveridge on the 4th Canon of Nice, Cypr. Ep. lxxvii. 4.

It was to guard against this evil that the system of Metropolitans was introduced—a system which appears to date from the very age of the Apostles. All united action among men assumes them to form themselves into bodies; and bodies imply the existence of a central power, and some definite bounds, by which its authority is limited. Such bounds were provided for the ancient Church by the civil divisions of the empire. The Bishops of each division were required by Canon to act together, to recognize some one of their number as their head, or Metropolitan, and to proceed under his direction in the appointment of their brethren. Thus did every new appointment become the collective act of the whole Episcopate of the province. The priority was especially conceded to such Churches as had been founded by an Apostle, if one such existed in a province; and together with the election of Bishops, it provided the means whereby questions respecting that faith which was committed to them, might be decided. For such “Churches, which the Apostles themselves founded,” were considered to be the “wombs and originals of the faith.”<sup>5</sup> “Go through the Apostolic Churches,” says Tertullian, “in which the very seats of the Apostles, at this day, preside over their own places.” “Is Achaia near to thee? Thou hast Corinth—If thou canst travel into Asia, thou hast Ephesus. But if thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome.”<sup>6</sup> Hence does St. Augustin speak of such Apostolical<sup>7</sup> Churches, as having an especial right to be consulted when disputes arose; and Innocent Ist. when asserting the authority of his see, refers to the fact, that “over all Italy, the Gauls, Spain, Africa, and Sicily, and the interjacent islands, no one formed Churches, except those, whom the venerable Apostle Peter, or his successors, made priests.”<sup>8</sup> For it gradually became the custom, that those whom any Metropolitan<sup>9</sup> consecrated, should give a promise of obedience to the See, from which they derived their authority. An oath of Canonical obedience does not appear

<sup>5</sup> Tertull. De Præs. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Id. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Ep. xliii. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ep. ad Decent. Hard. i. 995.

<sup>9</sup> Vid. Ivonis Carn. Ep. 73, as quoted by Beveridge on the sixth Canon of Nice, sec. 9. p. 59.

to have been formally given before the time of Pope Leo,<sup>10</sup> by whom a written engagement of this kind is censured as a novelty; but the principle was recognized at the Council of Chalcedon, where various Bishops admitted the authority of the See of Constantinople, because thence they had derived their own orders.<sup>11</sup>

Such was the system of Metropolitans, as it grew up in the early Church. Each province of the empire formed a whole, for the purposes of consecration; the Bishop of the chief city, or of some Apostolical See, presided over his brethren; and thus were those disputes prevented, which party spirit would otherwise have engendered. It may be objected, that there is no direct Scriptural authority for such an arrangement. Scripture, however, gives scarcely any details of the Church's system, which it yet recognizes as a reality, proceeding from Apostolic appointment, and as co-ordinate, therefore, in its authority with Scripture itself. For why should not those things which were *done* by the Apostles, through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, be as reverently received as those which they wrote or *spoke*? And history witnesses both that the Bishops received a trust in common, which they could not have exercised without some such arrangement, and also that this was the particular arrangement which obtained from the first. It commenced probably from the time when St. Paul addressed "all the Saints," which were "in all Achaia," in the Epistle which he addressed to the Church at Corinth; and when he left Titus to "ordain elders" in the hundred cities of Crete. Perhaps this is why Ephesus is put first in St. John's address to the seven Churches of Asia. The Apostolical Fathers witness both to the right of interference on the part of the adjoining Bishops of the province, and to the superiority over his brethren, which belonged to the Bishop of the chief city. As to the first point, St. Clement says, "Our Apostles knew from Our Lord Jesus Christ, that strife would arise respecting the Episcopal title. Having, therefore, exact knowledge of the matter, they appointed the aforementioned persons, and gave

<sup>10</sup> Epist. 12. ad Anast. Thess. sec. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Actio xvi. Hard. ii. 639.

a right of mutual interference,<sup>12</sup> that when Bishops died, other approved men might succeed to their office." And the authority of the presiding Bishops appears from St. Ignatius, who speaks of the Church of Rome, as "*presiding* in the region of the Romans,"<sup>13</sup> and identifies the Church of Antioch with that of Syria,<sup>14</sup> of which it was the metropolis.

Towards the end of the second century arose the first question of internal discipline which the Church had to decide—that respecting the time of keeping Easter. Such a question was sure to bring out the governing power of the Church; it showed to whom the decision of questions was committed. And it proves the system of Metropolitans to have been in full vigour. In Italy a Synod was held under the presidency of Victor, Bishop of Rome; the Bishop of Ephesus presided in Asia Minor; those of Cæsarea and Jerusalem in Palestine; while the circumstance mentioned by Eusebius, that in Pontus the senior<sup>15</sup> Bishop presided, appears to be an exception, which points to the existence of a general rule. Soon afterwards a Council was held in Africa on the subject of Re-baptism, which in like manner had for its president Agrippinus,<sup>16</sup> the Metropolitan of Carthage. The Church's practice is expressed in the thirty-third Canon ascribed to the Apostles, which was afterwards confirmed and put into more complete form by the ninth Canon of the Council of Antioch. It required "the Bishops of each nation to do nothing of importance without the concurrence of their head,"<sup>17</sup> whose concurrence, by the sixth Canon of Nice, was absolutely essential to the consecration of any new Bishop.

But the organization of the Hierarchy did not stop here. It speedily advanced from the system of Metropolitans to that of Patriarchs. It is generally admitted that the Churches of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, were early possessed of very extensive power. The references made by Novatian to Alexandria,<sup>18</sup> in his opposition to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome—

<sup>12</sup> So I understand with Möhler the words *μεταξὺ ἐπινομῶν δεδωκασί*, in St. Clement's Ep. sec. 44. vid. Möhler's *Einheit in der Kirche*, sec. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Ad Rom. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ad Magnes. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Euseb. v. 23.

<sup>16</sup> St. Cyp. Jubaiano, Ep. lxxiii. 3, and St. Aug. de Bapt. Con. Petil. 22.

<sup>17</sup> 33rd Can. of Apos. Bruns, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Eusebius vi. 45.

the statement that Fabius of Antioch<sup>19</sup> was supposed to favour him, together with the counter-statements sent by Cornelius<sup>20</sup> to these two Sees—imply that some peculiar character and authority was supposed to belong to them in the middle of the third century. The exercise of something, which might be called Patriarchal authority, did not necessarily imply that the adjacent Metropolitans must apply to the Patriarch for consecration; though this no doubt was the tendency of things, and as the institutions of the Church became fixed, they gradually assumed this form. Tertullian refers to Rome as “an authority close at hand,”<sup>21</sup> thereby attributing some superiority to that Church; but the African Bishops, whether ordinary or Metropolitan, were consecrated at that time without foreign interference. Again: That the Patriarchal authority, when it became a settled power, referred to other points besides the appointment of Bishops, may be seen from the conduct of the Egyptian Bishops at the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>22</sup> They should give offence, they said, to their people, if they agreed to any resolutions without the concurrence of the See of Alexandria. The sixth Canon of the Council of Nice seems to have been designed to give a more settled shape to these indefinite forms of Patriarchal jurisdiction; the authority exercised by the See of Rome was laid down as a model, by which the relation of the Bishop of Alexandria to his brethren in Egypt and the adjoining districts, should be determined. The statements of Ruffinus render it probable that the Roman Primate dispensed with the services of Metropolitans in his own immediate neighbourhood (the suburbican provinces) or at least was consulted in regard to every Bishop whom they consecrated; and the like privilege seems to have been conferred upon the Bishop of Alexandria. Such powers he certainly exercised at a later period; for Synesius,<sup>23</sup> who was Metropolitan of Ptolemais, states that the Bishops, who were chosen within

<sup>19</sup> Eusebius, vi. 44.<sup>20</sup> Id. vi. 43, 46.<sup>21</sup> De Præscrip. 36.<sup>22</sup> Si extra voluntatem Præsidis nostri aliquid faciamus, sicut præsumptores et non servantes secundum canones antiquam consuetudinem, omnes Ægyptiacæ regiones insurgunt in nos. Actio 4th.—Harduin. ii. 418.<sup>23</sup> Epis. 76. ad Theoph. Bib. Patr. vi. p. 129.



his district, and approved by himself, could not be consecrated without the consent and confirmation of the Patriarch of Alexandria.

The institution of Patriarchates received a more formal sanction at the Council of Constantinople, though it does not appear, as Socrates<sup>24</sup> has been sometimes understood to say, that they were first constituted by this Council. The reference which it makes to the Council of Nice in its second Canon, shows that it only gave shape and definiteness to an ancient institution. The reason assigned by the Council itself (*Canon 2*,) and alluded to by Socrates, is the necessity of obviating those intrusions, to which the Arian disputes had not unnaturally given occasion. Thus while St. Gregory Nazianzen had been consecrated as Bishop of Constantinople by Meletius, the Primate of Antioch;<sup>25</sup> Peter, Primate of Alexandria,<sup>26</sup> had sent Bishops who had consecrated Maximus the Cynic to the same See. Here was a ready opening for disputes, which could only be obviated by some definite and binding law. Yet because the Church system was only the growth and unfolding of principles, which were implied in the very existence of the Christian society, therefore, its organization went on expanding itself, independently of any positive enactments. The general authority of the See of Antioch was recognized indeed by the second Canon of Constantinople, as it had been by the sixth Canon of Nice. But the relation of its Patriarch to the Metropolitans within his district was not determined; and a few years later we find him recommended to assimilate the usage in his Patriarchate to that which appears to have been the practice of the Patriarchate of Rome. Innocent I.<sup>27</sup> in giving this advice, referred to the Nicene Synod, as suggesting the principle on which the Patriarch of Antioch should proceed; and he goes on to recommend, that the Bishops in the more immediate neighbourhood of Antioch should be consecrated by him, and that his subordinate Metropolitans, who now consecrated Bishops by their own authority, should be required to do so by delegation. He also refers to St. Peter's temporary occupation of

<sup>24</sup> v. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Sozomen, vii. 3, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Id. vii. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Innoc. Ep. ad Alex.—Harduin i. 1012, 1013.

the See of Antioch, as the ground of its superiority. This is noticed by St. Chrysostom,<sup>28</sup> and St. Jerome.<sup>29</sup>

Here, then, we see the gradual growth of that organization, by which it was proposed to secure the unity of the Church. As its Episcopate was held to be one, intrusted with a single commission, and exercising a single power, it was essential that its territorial extension throughout the world should be accompanied by such relation between its parts, as should preserve the harmony of their action. Such a relation among the Church's rulers led to the formation of what may be called a Hierarchy. It was not the introduction of any new principle; the Hierarchy was merely the form into which the one body of the Church grew, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. It was only the expanding of those organs, which are implied when it is said that the Church is a living whole. An organized body must of necessity imply parts; those parts must of necessity arrange themselves; and since the unity of the whole was a condition of their arrangement, it must needs unfold itself in some such form, as the wisdom of God in fact provided. So that the Metropolitan and Patriarchal systems were not an after thought, added on to the system of Episcopacy, but merely that form and arrangement of Episcopacy, which the law of its unity, and the obligation of acting as a body, made a necessary condition of its growth. For the Hierarchy was only an organized Episcopacy. Just as an oak implies the existence of leaves and boughs, though no such things are to be seen in its infant state; so these future ramifications of the Church's Hierarchy, were implied in the very conception of the Christian kingdom, as it was instituted by Our Lord, and established by His Apostles.

<sup>28</sup> Vol. ii. p. 597. In St. Ign. M. No. 4.

<sup>29</sup> On Gal. Cap. 2, vol. iv. pt. 1. p. 244. The same circumstance was referred to at the Council of Chalcedon. Act. 7. Hard. ii. 491.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE FORM OF THE HIERARCHY PRESCRIBED BY THE  
PRIMACY OF ST. PETER.

THE last chapter showed by what means unity of action was secured among the successors of the Apostles. Guided by that Spirit of concord, which combined its whole body into one, the Church's rulers resolved themselves into that system of mutual interdependency, which is called a Hierarchy. Through its subordination to its Metropolitans and Patriarchs, the vast army of Bishops, though dispersed through all countries, moved forward in its holy warfare with unanimity and success.

But was this system of Metropolitans and Patriarchs all which was implied in the conception of the Gospel Kingdom? Was it sufficient in itself to secure unity, and thus to attain the object which it proposed to effect? Or did the Gospel contain the rudiments of any further design, and imply that Metropolitans and Patriarchs themselves were to be combined into one scheme and policy? No doubt such an idea would be wholly at variance with all worldly precedents; for earthly conquerors have never succeeded in subjecting the whole earth to the unity of a single control; and civilization has multiplied rather than diminished national distinctions. And probably such a result contributes both to individual happiness, and to intellectual and social improvement. But the course of prophecy and the earlier history of the Church seem to indicate that in this respect she would be a contrast to the world; and that the Spiritual Kingdom would restore that unity, which the division of languages had rendered incompatible with the social relations of mankind.

Such an issue seems implied in those prophecies, which speak of the Holy City as the antithesis of Babel, and declare that "Jerusalem is built as a city, which is at unity in itself."

So much seems certain; that unless some provision was made for the interdependence of the great Sees upon one another, disputes were as sure to rise up between them, as between their subject Bishops. The Synod of Antioch (*Can.* 14) had provided for the interference, under certain circumstances, of the Bishops of one Province with those of the next. But who was to determine on what principle this was to be permitted? The Patriarchal Sees on various occasions afforded the main subject of contention. In the third century the Bishop of Antioch had been deposed for heresy by a Council of his brethren, to whose decision he had refused to submit. They were able to eject him from the See-house by the aid of the civil power, but he still continued to have his partizans. In the next century the majority of Eastern Bishops had concurred in the election of Meletius to the same See; but Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari, suspecting him of Arianism, consecrated Paulinus as a rival Bishop of Antioch. In the year 403, Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, goes to Constantinople with a number of Egyptian Bishops, holds a Synod in a church in the suburbs, and deposes St. Chrysostom, the Patriarch of that city. It was hardly possible that such disputes should be altogether avoided, but their continual occurrence must have satisfied all men, that without a fixed order and rule there could be no united action in the collective Episcopate. During the Arian divisions numerous Bishops were expelled from their cities through the court favour of heretics, while the defenders of orthodoxy interfered in cases in which they had no regular jurisdiction. Thus the Oriental Bishops complain that St. Athanasius,<sup>1</sup> on his way back from his exile at Treves, "overthrew the Church's order through his whole journey, and restored condemned Bishops."

Unless some remedy existed for this state of things, it would seem idle to speak of the Church as the authoritative

<sup>1</sup> Hilarii Frag. Hist. iii. 8, p. 1312. So St. Chrysostom deposed thirteen Bishops, and appointed new ones, where he seems to have had no regular jurisdiction.—*Sozomen*, viii. 6.

witness to doctrine. For the Church cannot act without organization; and the unity of that organization was not only from the first a condition of its existence, but the necessity of such unity is implied in the very nature of the case. If a man has two organs of utterance, and they give discordant testimony, how can it be known what are his sentiments; and how can the Body of Christ speak at all, unless the organs of her utterance are unanimous? A Bishop, therefore, who is out of communion with his brethren, loses, *ipso facto*, all right to speak as the Church's interpreter. He may be listened to for his individual learning and piety, but his official claim is destroyed by his isolation. Such is the necessary result of those principles, on which the Episcopal office is grounded by its acknowledged interpreter, St. Cyprian; namely, that "the Episcopate is one, and is a collective office exercised by individuals."<sup>2</sup>

Now, if we would inquire whether any means exist for the correction of these evils, to whom can we turn more naturally than to St. Cyprian himself? Being the first person who has left a treatise on the Unity of the Church, he might be expected to point out how such a difficulty should be obviated. Moreover, his authority has been admitted by all parties; his works have been so widely quoted by subsequent writers, that their authenticity cannot be questioned without discrediting almost all ancient records;<sup>3</sup> and as he preceded the conversion of the Emperors, the system which he describes cannot have owed its existence to their patronage. Does he suggest any remedy, then, for the obvious evil that the Episcopate had certain independent heads, who were as likely to differ as the worldly leaders of different countries? The guiding Spirit of God had resolved the Church into a certain organization, in order that this difficulty might not arise in its inferior por-

<sup>2</sup> De Unit. p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> This external evidence renders it needless to notice Mr. Shepherd's objections to St. Cyprian's authority. Similar objections might be made to any ancient writer, as they have been to Holy Scripture. (*Vid. Whately's Historic Doubts.*) It is enough that St. Cyprian is referred to by almost all subsequent writers. Some of his letters might be restored, if lost, from the quotations of St. Augustin. Mr. Shepherd's objections evidently arise from the fact, that he is clear-sighted enough to see the conclusion which results from St. Cyprian's statements.



tions: the Bishop was the natural head and representative of his Diocese; the Bishops of each Province were held together by their relation to a Metropolitan; did St. Cyprian discern any principle by which Metropolitans and Patriarchs themselves might be united, and by which that unity which prevailed at the base of the building might extend to its summit?

Now, St. Cyprian opens his treatise on the Unity of the Church by reference to a certain prerogative, which he supposes to have been bestowed upon St. Peter, with a view of maintaining the oneness of the Body of Christ. "The Lord saith unto Peter, *I say unto thee* (saith He) that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven. To him again, after His resurrection, He says, Feed My sheep. *Upon him being one He builds His Church*; and though He gives to all the Apostles an equal power, and says, As My Father sent Me, even so send I you; receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted to him, and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained; yet *in order to manifest unity, He has by His own authority so placed the source of the same authority, as to begin from one*. Certainly the other Apostles also were what Peter was, endued with an equal fellowship both of power and honour; but *a commencement is made from unity, that the Church may be set before us as one*; which one Church, in the Song of Songs, doth the Holy Spirit design and name in the Person of Our Lord. My dove, My spotless one, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, elect of her that bare her. He who holds not this unity of the Church, does he think that he holds the faith?"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Several other sentences occur in the Benedictine edition, but have not been introduced into the text, because their authenticity is disputed. And it will be seen that statements equivalent to them occur in St. Cyprian's letters, *e. g.* "Primacy is given to Peter, that the Church of Christ may be set forth as one, and the See [Cathedra] as one. And they all are shepherds, yet the flock is shown to be one, such as to be fed by all the Apostles with unani-

This general statement respecting the office of St. Peter is borne out by the repeated assertions which St. Cyprian makes in his letters, both that St. Peter possessed such a pre-eminence, and that it had been bestowed upon him for the purpose of preserving the Church's unity. "For to Peter, on whom He built His Church, and from whom He caused the principle of unity to take shape and form, did Our Lord first give that power, that what was bound on earth should be bound in Heaven."<sup>5</sup> It was Peter, then, "on whom the Church was built by Our Lord;"<sup>6</sup> he it was "whom Our Lord chose as first, and on whom He built His Church;" and who "had the Primacy."<sup>7</sup> In another letter he complains that certain malcontents from Africa "dare to sail to the See of Peter, and to the principal Church, whence sacerdotal unity has arisen."<sup>8</sup> But they forget, he adds, that the parties whom they designed to mislead, "were those Romans, whose faith was praised by the Apostle, to whom perfidy (*i. e.* faithlessness in doctrine) cannot make its approach." For the Bishop of Rome, according to him, was St. Peter's successor; Cornelius, he says, was chosen to be Pope, at a time when "the place of Fabianus, that is, the place of Peter, and the rank of the sacerdotal chair was vacant."<sup>9</sup> He speaks of the Church of Rome as "the root and mother of the Catholic Church,"<sup>10</sup> and says, that to communicate with its Bishop was "the same thing as to communicate with the Catholic Church."<sup>11</sup> For "there is one Church which was founded by Christ Our Lord upon Peter, on the principle, and by the law of unity."<sup>12</sup> And during the vacancy of the See of Rome he appears to recognize the claim to superintendence which was set up by its Presbyters, because they say, "it is incumbent upon us, who appear to be put in authority, to guard the flock in place of its pastor."<sup>13</sup> Neither does his correspondent

mous agreement." And again: "He who deserts the See of Peter, on whom the Church is founded, is he assured that he is in the Church?"—*De Unit.* 3, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. lxxiii. 7, ad Jubaian.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. lix. 9, ad Cornel.

<sup>7</sup> lxxi. 3, ad Quint.

<sup>8</sup> Ep. lix. 19, Cornelio.

<sup>9</sup> Antoniano. lv. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ut Ecclesiæ Catholicæ radicem et matricem agnoscerent.—*Cornelio.* xlviii. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Te secum, hoc est cum Catholica Ecclesia communicare.—*Antoniano.* lv. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Ep. lxx. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Epis. viii. 1.

Firmilian, though exhibiting the utmost hostility against St. Stephen, the existing Bishop of Rome, deny what he states to be St. Stephen's assertion, that "he holds the succession of Peter, on whom were laid the foundations of the Church;" and again, that "he has by succession the chair of Peter."<sup>14</sup>

Such are the statements of the earliest writer on the Unity of the Church. He supposed that the whole Body of Christ was intended to be one; that its Unity was to be of a practical kind, enabling it to speak with authority on all questions which should arise; that its utterance was to be through the consentient determination of all its Bishops; and, finally, (which is the point immediately before us) that their co-operation was secured by that peculiar commission which St. Peter had received, antecedently to the general commission to all the Apostles. And this Primacy he supposed to be inherited by the Bishop of Rome, as occupying the "seat of St. Peter," "the principal Church," "the root and mother" of all the rest. Here, then, is a principle, by which that arrangement under Metropolitans and Patriarchs, which constituted the original organization of the Church, as it was instituted by the Holy Apostles, might receive its completion. For if the mutual interdependence among these several authorities issued in a relation to a single head, it was possible to obviate those disputes, which must necessarily arise, so long as the various parts were wholly independent. And these statements of St. Cyprian are of peculiar importance, because this Primacy was grounded, according to him, on Our Lord's own appointment. For this raises it above those other portions of the Church's system, of which it is the consummation, but which have their origin not in any precise words of Our Lord, but merely in the order which was introduced by His Apostles. Whereas, if St. Cyprian's testimony be accepted; if such a provision was made by Our Lord, and such is the interpretation which the Church has put upon it; wherein does this differ from any other elementary portion of the Gospel Revelation? Does not the doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, depend upon certain statements respecting the Three Persons in the glo-

<sup>14</sup> Cypr. Ep. lxxv. 17.

rious Godhead, which the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, has collected into a system, and formed into a whole? Now, what is there of which Our Lord speaks more emphatically than the unity of His Church—a condition, moreover, which is essential to the exercise of that office of a final judge, which the Apostles claimed for it?—and what, then, can be expected to be of more importance than a provision, which He is asserted to have laid down, antecedently to its existence, as the means by which this end might be accomplished?

These considerations lead us to the three following inquiries: 1st. Is there evidence from Scripture that a Primacy was bestowed by Our Lord upon St. Peter? 2ndly. Was such a Primacy exercised by St. Peter himself and his successors? 3rdly. Has the collective Church explained the nature and limits of the authority implied in such a Primacy? These questions shall be replied to in order.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A PRIMACY IS ASSIGNED TO ST. PETER IN THE GOSPELS.

IN the Gospels we find six several particulars, each of which distinguish St. Peter from the other Apostles, and mark him out as their chief.

1st. There are four lists of the Holy Apostles in the New Testament; and while there is considerable variety in the order observed respecting the other names, in three things they all agree—St. Peter's name always stands first; then those of the sons of Zebedee, except when St. Andrew is inserted as St. Peter's brother; that of Judas Iscariot (so long as it appears) is always the last. Now such an arrangement, as Olshausen observes, cannot have been accidental. Persons have attempted to account for it, by saying St. Peter was the first called, or that he was the eldest of the Apostles. But the former of these assertions can be proved to be false, the latter cannot be proved to be true. St. Andrew was certainly a follower of Christ before St. Peter. As Hilary the Deacon says, "If things were to be fixed by time, John began to preach before Christ: and Christ did not baptize John, but John Christ. But God does not judge in this way. Finally, Andrew followed Our Saviour before Peter, and yet Peter, not Andrew, received the Primacy."<sup>1</sup> And so far is there from being any proof that St. Peter was the eldest of the Apostles, that it seems not improbable that he was the younger even of the two sons of Jonas. For when they are mentioned together, before they entered on their



office, we read of Bethsaida as the "city of Andrew and Peter."<sup>2</sup> So that there is no improbability in the statement of Epiphanius, who, after mentioning that St. Andrew was the first to follow Our Lord, and then St. Peter, who was called through his brother's instrumentality, goes on: "For Andrew was the first to meet Christ, inasmuch as Peter was younger in age. But afterwards, when they had given up everything, the beginning was made from Peter. For he took the lead of his own brother. It is to be added, that God, who sees the disposition of the heart, and knows who is worthy to be put in the first room, chose Peter to be the leader of His disciples."<sup>3</sup>

2ndly. Besides the position which it occupies, St. Peter's name is, in every instance, introduced with some circumstance which marks his pre-eminence. St. Mark and St. Luke refer to the new name bestowed upon him, which will be noticed presently: in the bare list given in the Acts, his name alone has the Article prefixed—a circumstance, which though the natural result of its position, yet discriminates it from that of the rest—but by St. Matthew he is expressly called the *First*.<sup>4</sup> Now, what is the meaning of the *Primacy*, thus attributed to him by the Evangelist? Some may say that it was a mere honorary distinction; a pure concession of precedence, which had no results. But this is at variance with the whole scheme of the Gospel economy; the very principle of which appears to have been to confer real powers, but no honorary titles. The Episcopal system grew insensibly out of those powers, which were bestowed by the Apostles upon Timothy, Titus, and others whom they appointed as their successors; the office of the Apostles grew out of the fact that Our Lord *sent* them, as He had been sent by His Father: in each case no title was bestowed, except such as was rendered necessary by the reality itself. Now, Our Lord applies this principle to the case of the Primacy: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be *first* among you, let him be your servant." He does not declare

<sup>2</sup> John i. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Hæres. li. 14-17.

<sup>4</sup> "The first," not "first," for *πρῶτος* "being an ordinal is not the less definite by being anarthrous."—*Middleton's Greek Article* in loco.

that no such *power* as that of Primate should exist among them, any more than His following words derogate from His own superiority ; but He requires that its effect should be to dispose its possessor to take the lowest place. Such a statement, then, is not inconsistent with the belief that a real power was designed by that priority, which the Evangelists give to St. Peter ; but it is wholly at variance with the opinion that Our Lord designed to constitute an honorary Primacy. Grotius surely interprets St. Matthew's expression rightly, when he says on this passage : " St. Peter was no doubt appointed Head of the College of Apostles, with a view of maintaining the connexion of the body."

3rdly. To this direct statement of St. Peter's priority, must be added, that he, and he only, received a new name, when he was admitted into the number of the Apostles. Our Lord indeed bestowed the epithet of " Sons of Thunder" on the two next of His Apostles ; but it was an epithet only, by which their original names were not superseded. But in St. Peter's case Our Lord gave notice, at their first meeting, that He should impose upon him a new name (*John*, i. 43,) and when the College of Apostles was constituted, He gave effect to His purpose (*Mark*, iii. 16.) Now, that which renders this circumstance so remarkable is, that the Jewish, like the Christian system, was ushered in by the attaching a new name to its chiefs. Jacob, the immediate parent of the Israelites, and Abraham, their great progenitor, had been designated in this manner by Almighty God, when He bestowed upon them names indicative of the offices to which He called them. The like distinction, then, bestowed by Christ upon one of His Apostles, seemed to mark him out, as taking a place in the New Covenant, analogous to that which in the old had been occupied by Abraham or Israel. Moreover, the name itself was most remarkable. Our Lord had been beheld by Daniel as that " stone, cut out of a mountain without hands," which was to fill the earth. For in Him the Divine nature was to enter into the world, and to impregnate humanity with supernatural excellence. This was to be effected through His Church, of which He was to be the sole foundation ; and though to unbelievers He was

"a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," yet to Jerusalem "a chief corner-stone, elect, precious." When Our Lord, therefore, bestowed on Simon the name of Peter, He not only changed His disciple's name, but He changed it for one which implied an immediate derivation and commission from Himself. Since Our Lord was the true rock on which the Church was founded, to bestow the name of *Rock* on one of His disciples implied some peculiar delegation of His own functions, and an especial authority to represent Himself. So Origen explains it: Our Lord "said that he should be called Peter, by a name borrowed from the rock, that is, Christ, that as from wisdom a man is called wise, and holy from holiness, so from the rock he should be called Peter."<sup>5</sup> And St. Leo: "I am the indestructible rock, I am the corner-stone, who make both one; I am the foundation, than which other cannot be laid. Yet you also are a rock, because you are consolidated by My excellence, so that those things, which belong in property to Me, are common to you by participation."<sup>6</sup> Thus, then, Our Lord not only marked out St. Peter as the head of His College of Apostles, by changing his name, as had been done respecting the two main founders of the Israelitish family; but as in their case He bestowed a name which conveyed a peculiar commission, and indicated that the person who bore it was admitted to a more immediate fellowship with His own character, and had an especial authority to represent Himself.

4thly. These are preliminary grounds for supposing that St. Peter must be designed to possess a certain Primacy in the College of Apostles. The direct proof of it is the distinct and peculiar commission with which he was intrusted. When he had confessed Our Lord, saying, "Thou art the Christ;" Our Lord replied to him by saying, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall

<sup>5</sup> In Caten. ad Joh. i. 41. cited by Passaglia, i. 2, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Sermo. iii. 2. Tertullian gives the same reason for the name of Peter, as drawn from Our Lord's own character of a Rock: and he also refers to the analogous case of Abraham. Cur Petrum?.....An quia et petra et lapis Christus?.....Itaque affectavit carissimo Discipulorum de figuris suis peculiariter nomen communicare, &c.—*Con. Marc.* iv. 13.

not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Now, these words have no parallel in the address to the other Apostles. They were followed, indeed, by that which appears to be the general gift of ministerial power, and which at a later period was extended also to the residue of the Twelve. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." To bind and loose is that function, to which all possessors of priestly power, and especially the Apostles and their successors, have been admitted: but the preceding words of St. Peter's commission look plainly to something connected with the founding of the Church, and, therefore, to that peculiar privilege of representing his Lord, which is implied in the name which had been bestowed upon this chiefest Apostle. Of course when Our Lord speaks of building "upon this rock," He does not mean that He Himself, whom St. Peter had just confessed, is not the real foundation; "upon Me I will build thee," says St. Augustin, "not Me upon thee."<sup>7</sup> The very ground of this Apostle's superiority, the principle on which his Primacy depends, is merely that he was chosen to be the especial representative of his Master. As St. Jerome expresses it: "What is meant by the words, *And I say unto thee?* Because thou hast said to Me, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God; and I say unto thee, not in idle and inoperative words, but *I say unto thee*, because My saying makes it an act, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. As He Himself, who is the light, gave to His Apostles to be called the light of the world, and as they received their other names from the Lord; so to Simon who believed in the Rock, Christ gave the name of Peter, and by a metaphor drawn from a rock, it is appropriately said to him, I will build My Church upon thee."<sup>8</sup>

The circumstance, then, which was declared respecting St. Peter in these prophetic words of Our Lord, was that he should be associated by peculiar co-partnership<sup>9</sup> in one of

<sup>7</sup> Sermo. lxxvi. 1.

<sup>8</sup> In Matth. xvi. vol. iv. 1, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> There is probably a reference to this peculiar relation of St. Peter to Our Lord, when we are told that Christ appeared to him shortly before his martyr-

the functions of his Master, and become by grace that which Christ was by nature. And this, which is directly expressed in the particular from which he derived his name, is expressed indirectly in the other particular which indicates his officé. For his function of bearing the Keys pertained primarily to Christ: it is Christ who "hath the Key of the house of David," who "openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." It was on a type of Christ that was laid "the Key of the house of David." So that to bear "the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," as well as to be the Rock of the Church, did not imply any independent authority in St. Peter, but arose merely from his being the especial representative of his Lord. And this circumstance answers the objection, that by the Rock, Our Lord may either have meant Himself, or that He may have meant not the person of St. Peter, but his confession. No doubt Our Lord Himself is the real Rock on which the Church is founded. But when He speaks of taking His chief Apostle into association with Himself, the reference to Himself is not excluded, but extended. Again: It was St. Peter's faith in his Master's office, which not only fitted him to become the means through which it should take effect, but led Our Lord to declare the commission which he should receive. Both these considerations, therefore, are noticed by those who speak of St. Peter's confession. "Christ is the Rock," says St. Ambrose. "To His disciple also He denied not the grace of this name, that he also should be Peter, because from the '*petra*' he hath the solidity of stedfastness, the firmness of faith."<sup>10</sup> But such explanations are not meant to exclude the *personal* application to St. Peter. St. Chrysostom, after explaining the Rock to be "the faith of St.

dom, and told him that He was come to Rome to be crucified. "Intellexit ergo Petrus quod iterum Christus crucifigendus esset in servulo."—*S. Ambros. Ep. i. 21, 13, p. 867.*

<sup>10</sup> Expos. Luc. Lib. vi. 97. The word *Rock* is employed by the Ancient writers for two persons, and two things—Christ and Peter, the objective faith taught by the Lord, the subjective faith entertained by His disciple. But these senses are all relative to one another: Peter is the *rock* because he is associated to Christ; and his faith is *rock-like*, because it is based upon his Master.



Peter's confession," adds, as a mark of Our Lord's divine power, that He could "exhibit a man that is a fisher more solid than any rock."<sup>11</sup> And this was the sense in which the promise was originally understood; for every ante-Nicene writer who refers to the passage, supposes that reference is made to the *person* of St. Peter. He is called "the Rock of the Church," both by Tertullian and Hippolytus,<sup>12</sup> "on whom the Lord built His Church;"<sup>13</sup> "that great foundation of the Church, and most solid rock, on which Christ founded His Church;"<sup>14</sup> "Peter on whom the foundations of the Church were laid."<sup>15</sup>

The derivative interpretations which arise out of this first and main one, were no doubt admitted more readily, because the pointedness of Our Lord's words was diminished, by their transfusion from His own Syriac into the Greek idiom. "The name of a man could not, according to the Greek usage, be expressed by the feminine *πετρα*, while the masculine *πετρος* did not commonly signify that which Christ wished to express, *i. e.* such a stone as is commonly laid for a foundation."<sup>16</sup> Whereas in Syriac, as appears at present from the Peshito version, the term in each member of the sentence is identical. Had St. Augustin, for instance, known that Our Lord's words were "Thou art *Cepho*, and on this *Cepho* I will build My Church," he would not have employed the argument which he does in his *Retractations*.<sup>17</sup> For after stating that he had often applied the passage to the person of Peter, as he had learned to do from a hymn of St. Ambrose, he adds as a second interpretation, which might be given, that "the Rock was Christ," "and so Peter, named from this Rock, would represent the person of the Church, which is founded upon this Rock, and has received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." And then he proceeds, as the reason for giving such an interpretation: "For it was not said to him, Thou art *Petra*, but Thou art *Petrus*." Now, of

<sup>11</sup> In Matth. Hom. liv. 3.

<sup>12</sup> De Præscrip. 22—In St. Theophan. 9. Gallandi. vol. ii. 494.

<sup>13</sup> Cyp. Ep. lxxi. 3, and De Habitu Virg. p. 164.

<sup>14</sup> Origen in Exod. Hom. v. 4.

<sup>15</sup> St. Stephen and Firmilian in Ep. Cyp. lxxv. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Grotius on St. Matt. xvi. 18.

<sup>17</sup> l. 21. 1.

this distinction between the masculine and the feminine word, the original Syriac affords no trace.

In explaining the passage, however, as though it were designed to exhibit St. Peter as there presentative of the Church, St. Augustin as completely associates St. Peter in another way with the Person of his Master, as do the words of St. Matthew, when literally accepted. St. Peter, he says, was the especial representative of the Church. "Our Lord Jesus, as you know, before His Passion, chose His Disciples, whom He named Apostles. Among these, Peter nearly everywhere was thought worthy to represent the person of the whole Church. On account of his thus representing the whole Church, he was thought worthy to hear, 'I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.' For these keys, not any individual, but the unity of the Church received. Hence the excellency of Peter is set forth, in that he represented the universality and unity of the Church."<sup>18</sup> The reason why the Church was represented by an individual, St. Augustin, like St. Cyprian, understood to be, that it was a *body*, so that the unity of the *whole* was essential to its life. "Therefore one stood for all, because unity is in all;"<sup>19</sup> the whole, that is, considered collectively, makes a single body. But why was St. Peter its especial representative? Not merely on account of that prominence of character, which no doubt fitted him for his post, but by reason of the free selection of that Master, who had indicated His favour by bestowing upon him a name derived from Himself. "For the Rock is not called from Peter, but Peter from the Rock, just as Christ is not called from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ." St. Peter, therefore, "by reason of the Primacy of his Apostolate, supported the character of the Church, and was a type of its universality."<sup>20</sup> For inasmuch as the Church, being Christ's Body, was contained in Him, it might be considered, says Augustin, to be identical also with that Disciple, whom He associated most closely with Himself. "It was the will of Christ to make Peter, to whom He commended His sheep as to another self, one with Him-

<sup>18</sup> Sermo. cccxcv. 2.

<sup>19</sup> In Johan. cxviii. 4.

<sup>20</sup> In Johan. cxxiv. 5.

self, that so He might commend His sheep to him ; that He might be Head, and the other bear the figure of the body, that is, the Church, and that like man and wife they might be two in one flesh.”<sup>21</sup> So that this interpretation is an extension of St. Cyprian’s statement, that “the Church is in the Bishop ;” St. Augustin carries on the image, and asserts that the Church is in its chief Bishop. The idea is the same as that which Hilary the Deacon (as it seems) deduces from Our Lord’s paying tribute-money. “When Our Saviour ordered it to be given for Himself and Peter, He seems to have paid for all. For as the Apostles were all included in Our Saviour by virtue of His office, so after Our Saviour they are all included in Peter. For He made him to be head, that he might be shepherd of the Lord’s flock.”<sup>22</sup> So, then, St. Peter represents the united Church, because he is especially identified with his Master: he is not first because most prominent, but most prominent because chosen to be first. “When Christ speaks to one, unity is commended; and He speaks first to Peter, because Peter was first among the Apostles.”<sup>23</sup>

St. Augustin’s interpretation, then, comes to the same result with that which he had traditionally received, and against which he has no objection to make, save one which arises from the imperfect manner in which the Greek language expressed Our Lord’s words. He did not doubt, more than any other early interpreter, that a personal reference was made in this passage to the chief Apostle, by which some characteristic of his office was indicated. What that characteristic was appears from the particular, in which, taking the words literally, St. Peter was especially associated with his Master. For here were twelve men, who were designed to be the foundations of the future Church. It was to be “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets ;” and their names, therefore, were beheld by St. John in the foundations of the New Jerusalem. But they were not the original foundation: they were themselves built upon that true Rock, Jesus Christ, from which they derived their

<sup>21</sup> Sermo. xlv. 30.

<sup>22</sup> Quæst. lxxv. Ex Novo Test. in App. S. Aug. iii. 2. p. 73.

<sup>23</sup> S. Aug. Sermo. ccxcv. 4.

solidity. When Our Lord, therefore, bestowed it as an especial privilege upon one of their number, that he should share individually in that peculiar attribute, whereby the collective body of his brethren were qualified for their office, He surely marked out, that this one, at all events, should possess individually, that which the other members of the body should possess among them. So the power to open and shut the Kingdom of Heaven was bestowed upon the College of Apostles at large; but to put the keys into the hands of one, implied that *he* must be a party to their joint action. He may have stood in need of them, for the trust was bestowed upon them as a body; but they could not do without him. Any other member of the Apostolic College might, so far as we are told, have been dispensed with; but he who bore the keys and was the Rock of the Church, could not have been dispensed with. The loss of any other Apostle, as, for example, of St. James, did not break up the body, but it would seem to be broken up by the loss of St. Peter. For it was the "one Church, founded by Christ Our Lord upon Peter on the principle of unity."<sup>24</sup>

5thly. That such was the relation between "the First" Apostle and his brethren—that he was chosen individually to a trust which they received collectively—accords exactly with the remarkable words recorded by St. Luke, xxii. 31: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have *ye*, that he may sift *ye* as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee* that *thy* strength fail not, and when *thou* art converted, strengthen *thy* brethren." These words certainly imply that a specific trust was committed to the individual, who is thus singled out from the body of the Twelve. "It is manifest that they are all contained in Peter, for when praying for Peter He is understood to have prayed for all. For a people is always corrected or praised in its chief."<sup>25</sup> The commission, then, with which he was intrusted, implied him to be indispensable to the rest. They are spoken of as a body, which is to be succoured; he as the individual, from whom they are to receive support.

<sup>24</sup> Cyp. Ep. lxx. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Hilary the Deacon (apparently) in Quæst. lxxv. in Novo Test. App. to S. Aus. iii. 2. p. 74.



6thly. The same individual commission appears in the thrice-repeated charge to feed Christ's flock, which is recorded in the last chapter of St. John. This charge contains a reference probably to St. Peter's threefold denial, and also to his too confident declaration, that whatever might be done by others, he would never forsake his Lord. But it is not the less observable, that his restoration is accompanied by so peculiar a commission—a commission, whereby St. Chrysostom says, "Jesus putteth into his hands the chief authority among the brethren."<sup>26</sup> "For the sake of securing the blessing of unity," says St. Optatus, "the Blessed Peter, for whom it would have been enough, if after he had denied he had merely obtained pardon, both obtained a preference to all the Apostles, and received singly the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to be communicated to the rest."<sup>27</sup> Thus is he, to whom most had been forgiven, required to love most; and to bring strength out of weakness, becomes the ordained law of the economy of grace.

It is plain, then, from Scripture, that a Primacy was bestowed upon St. Peter: the commission given to him by Our Lord was peculiar and characteristic. Now, how comes it that a circumstance of so much importance should be past over with the little attention which it commonly receives among ourselves? The reason probably is, that the traditional interpretation of Scripture which is prevalent among us, has been derived, in great measure, from writers who were not Episcopalians.<sup>28</sup> For if Our Lord's appointment of His Apostles had no further result, as Presbyterians suppose, than the selection of certain individuals to attend upon His Person, and preach the Gospel for a few years after His death, what matters it whether one was put in greater trust than another? If no power was bestowed upon any of the Apostles, it can only have been an honorary Primacy which was bestowed upon their chief. For the inspiration of St. Peter has never been alleged to have differed from that of the other Apostles;

<sup>26</sup> In Joh. xxi. 15. Hom. 88.

<sup>27</sup> De Schis. Don. vii. 3.

<sup>28</sup> As Calvin, Luther, Drusius, Grotius, Capellus, and in later days, Henry, Doddridge, Macknight, &c. The one Anglican Commentator of importance is Hammond.



and his contribution to the volume of Scripture was small. And so soon as Our Lord's earthly pilgrimage had been accomplished, the purposes of His mission would be supposed to have been completed; to lay the foundations of the Gospel would, no doubt, have been a supernatural work, but natural principles would have sufficed for its maintenance: thenceforth every one would be left to interpret the new revelation as he could, by the light of reason, and the individual teaching of the Holy Spirit. Now, on this principle it would be a mere matter of curiosity whether an especial commission had been bestowed upon St. Peter: the inquiry would be of no more practical importance than whether one of the disciples of Socrates possessed more fully than another the confidence of their master.

But the subject has an entirely different aspect to those who believe that the kingdom of Christ is a supernatural system, which commenced, indeed, in the first Advent of the Son of Man, but will terminate only in His Second Coming. On this supposition the Gospel was not merely the declaration of certain remarkable events, which happened at one period of the world's history; but the introduction of a new creation, which began in the New Head of the human race, and must extend through all its members. Such a system requires to be perpetuated as well as commenced by supernatural power. The gifts of grace, which dwelt first in its Head, were extended, therefore, to His chosen Apostles, that from them they might be communicated to the whole body of their successors. Now, if this be so, the law, on which this gift is bestowed, must plainly be of importance so long as the gift continues. If the Bishops of Christendom are in the place of the Apostles, it cannot be immaterial whether their unity of action was secured by any peculiar provision. If the thrones of the Twelve are perpetuated in the undying Episcopate, and the Apostles still rule in the persons of their successors, then must Peter still speak in the midst of his brethren. So that the interest which is felt in his special commission depends upon the general estimate which is formed respecting the Gospel Kingdom, and respecting the perpetuity and extent of the actions of Our Lord. Those who imagine that Christ

was designing to institute an economy which should be as lasting as the world, that He not only forecast every thing which should happen, but laid the foundations of a spiritual polity which was to take in all times and all nations, will attach great weight to a prediction so solemnly given, and calculated to produce so great an effect. Only twice, at all events, did Our Lord speak of that Church, which was to be a part of Himself, and which He died to found. The first of these occasions was when His chief Apostle had borne that remarkable witness to His hidden character, which was the result of special revelation. In answer to the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Our Lord replied, by communicating the meaning of that name which He had given to His disciple. "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto *thee* the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Surely, then, this trust must live on as part of the Church's general commission; if the power to bind and loose, of which it is a portion, be perpetuated in the successors of the Twelve, the provision thus made for their unity of action must live also. To get rid of it, the Apostolic entail must be cut off altogether; and the arrangements of Our Lord's Kingdom must be supposed to have been wholly superseded. So long as the Episcopate is believed to be built upon the foundation of the Twelve, it is impossible to leave out that chief of their number, who by name and office was associated to the true Rock, that he might give stability to his brethren. So long as the Apostles are believed to open and shut Heaven through the ministry of their successors, it is impossible to omit that centre of unity, who bore the keys of office in the midst of his brethren.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ST. PETER'S PRIMACY RECOGNIZED IN THE ACTS AND THE  
EPISTLES.

It is commonly urged as an objection to the statements which have been made in the last Chapter, that St. Peter does not seem to have exercised such a power as has been attributed to him; neither does it appear to have been claimed by his immediate successors. Here, then, are two points to be considered. Does it appear from the history of the Church that St. Peter acted as Primate; and was any such Primacy possessed by his earliest successors?

Now, it is essential to bear in mind the exact point which is to be established. What is meant by St. Peter's Primacy? It must not be confounded with that Supremacy of the Pope, which has existed in later times, and which has derived its shape from the decrees of Councils, and the custom of Christendom. The See of Rome is older than all the thrones of the earth; and it has acquired various functions in those eighteen centuries, during which all the institutions of Europe have formed themselves around it. But the Primacy of St. Peter, in its original shape, was not a defined power; it may from the first have enabled the Apostles to co-operate, but its own nature and limits were not fixed by any positive regulations. Let us go back, then, to the time when the Church existed in its embryo form in the College of Apostles. As yet there was no set of laws, or at least none has been preserved, by which their functions were discriminated from those of their subordinate assistants; and we are left uncertain whether St. Barnabas succeeded to the full powers of the

Apostolate, and whether St. James, of Jerusalem, was one of the Twelve. Yet the whole Body was instinct with that living power, through the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which was gradually to shape it into all the institutions of the Church. The acts through which this organization was to be attained, were the teaching of doctrine and the ministration of sacraments ; and the condition on which the Church's life depended, was that it should be that one Body of Christ, which was inhabited by His Spirit. As yet, then, it would be unreasonable to expect any rules respecting the functions of the chief Apostle, since we have no rules respecting the functions of his brethren. If Cyprian has preserved the right interpretation of those events which are recorded in the Gospels, Our Lord's reason for giving this especial commission to His chief Apostle was to secure unity among the rest. We have seen that such an opinion is countenanced by the Gospels : is it negatived in the History which is recorded in the Acts?

The most decisive argument against it would be to show that some Apostle separated himself from St. Peter's communion, and formed a congregation apart. This is what some of St. Paul's converts at Corinth seem to have contemplated till they were reprehended by the Apostle. "Is Christ divided, was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" In order to maintain St. Peter's Primacy, it is not necessary to affirm that the other Apostles acted by his authority ; for they had previously received authority from Our Lord, which had never been superseded, and St. Paul was subsequently admitted to the same privilege by special miracle. Again : It was unnecessary that St. Peter should instruct the other Apostles, since all of them were inspired. All which the Primacy implies, is that which St. Cyprian asserts, and which appears to have been expressed in the words of Our Lord—the foundation was laid in one, that the whole Body might grow harmoniously—the keys were put into the hands of one, that the action of the whole Body might be accordant. This by no means did away with the authority of the rest, nor proves St. Peter to have had power to supersede or displace them ; it implies only that it was a

condition of their office, that each Apostle should be in union with the chief. Now, there is nothing certainly in the Acts which negatives this principle, for that book records no instance of a division in the Christian body. It may be said, perhaps, that so small a body might easily co-operate, especially since they were all taught by the Spirit, and that there was no likelihood, therefore, of such difference of opinion as parted St. Paul and St. Barnabas. This may be true; but the Ancient Church supposed that the thing was not left to accident; for that particular provision had been made against this danger by the appointment of St. Peter's Primacy. "The Church is founded on Peter, although in another place it is on all the Apostles, and all receive the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the strength of the Church is consolidated upon all, yet, therefore, is one chosen among the Twelve, that, a head being constituted, occasion of division might be done away."<sup>1</sup>

It is plain, then, that the Acts do not negative St. Peter's Primacy; but do they confirm it? Now, the Book of Acts consists of two parts. First, come twelve chapters, which present to us the history of the Church at large till the escape of St. Peter, and the death of Herod. These are followed by sixteen chapters respecting one particular mission, that of St. Paul to the Gentiles. In the first portion of the book, which describes the actions of all the Apostles, St. Peter is so entirely prominent, that his position might almost be compared with that which Our Lord Himself, while upon earth, occupied towards His disciples. Scarcely a single thing occurs, in which the Apostles take part as a body, in which he is not the individual, whose words give expression to the mind of the brethren. When a new Apostle is required in the room of Judas, "Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples;" and the residue joined him in doing that, which he pronounced "must" be done. No doubt he "does every thing with the common consent; nothing imperiously." But "both as being ardent, and as having been put in trust by Christ with the flock, and as having precedence in honour, he

<sup>1</sup> St. Jerom. adv. Jovinian. i. vol. iv. pt. 2. p. 168, Martianay.



always begins the discourse.”<sup>2</sup> When the multitude, therefore, came together on the day of Pentecost, “Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice.” His sermon only is recorded; and the multitude certainly regarded him as the head of their new instructors, for they “said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The same thing is observable in regard to the especial acts, whether of mercy or punishment, which were performed by the Apostles. The power of working miracles had been bestowed upon all of them; but when this power was to be exercised by the body, the act always proceeds from their chief. When Peter and John heal the lame man, it is Peter who “took him by the right hand and raised him up.” Again: When the same two Apostles encounter Simon Magus, his sentence is passed by Peter. When Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead, Peter pronounces their doom. So apparent was this, that those who desired to profit by their miraculous powers, “brought forth the sick into the streets,” “that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.” And so, in like manner, when that momentous change was to be made, whereby Gentiles should be admitted into the Church, Peter was chosen both to receive supernatural instruction respecting the Divine will, and to carry it into execution.

Now, if it be objected that this prominence of St. Peter was the result of those natural qualities which led him to be more active than his brethren, it may readily be admitted, that the Divine wisdom had selected a man, who possessed the talent of government, to be head of the Apostles. But if we suppose that the infant Church was guided, not by human wisdom, but by the Spirit of God, we shall not refer the conduct of the chief Apostle merely to human courage. As well might we suppose that the sagacity of Moses accounts for the passage through the wilderness; or that the conquest of Canaan was owing to the valour of Joshua. And at any rate such a mode of arguing shows that there is no force in the objection, that if our Lord had given St. Peter the Pri-

<sup>2</sup> St. Chrysostom on Acts i. 15. Hom. iii.

macy, its exercise would have been more apparent. For to argue that St. Peter took the lead through forwardness of temper, is to admit his actual prominence. All the ancient writers, however, agree in attributing St. Peter's acts to the especial commission with which he was intrusted: and think it necessary rather to account for the forbearance, with which at times he kept back, than for the forwardness which he usually exhibited. In the appointment of St. Matthias, for example, St. Chrysostom, while observing that St. Peter took the lead, yet praises his moderation, because he consulted the disciples at large, whereas he might have acted by his single authority. For "he had the same power to ordain, as they all collectively." Such moderation he considers an instance of "the noble spirit of the man," and that "prelacy then was not an affair of dignity, but of provident care for the governed."<sup>3</sup> Again: When St. Peter had visited Cornelius, "they of the circumcision" took offence at this deviation from the Jewish Law. Here St. Chrysostom notices on the one hand the boldness of the objectors, who "were not abashed at Peter's authority, nor at the signs which had taken place;"<sup>4</sup> and on the other, the forbearance of the Apostle, in consenting to be put upon his defence. "Observe how he excuses himself, and does not claim to use the authority of the teacher. For he knew that the more mildly he speaks, the more he shall subdue them."<sup>5</sup> In these remarks St. Chrysostom is followed by St. Gregory the Great. After observing that St. Peter "had received power over the kingdom of heaven," that he had "cured the sick with his shadow, that his word had slain sinners and raised the dead to life;" he says, in allusion to the remonstrances made on this occasion, "And yet this same first of the Apostles, though overflowing with such gifts of grace, though sustained by such power of miracles, replied to the complaint of the faithful not by authority but by reason; he expounded the cause in order. For had he, when blamed by the faithful, regarded the authority which he had received in the Holy Church, he might have replied, that the sheep, which had been committed to him, should not venture to censure their shepherd. But had he,

<sup>3</sup> Hom. iii. 3. In Acta.<sup>4</sup> Hom. In Acta xxiv. 2.<sup>5</sup> Id. xxiv. 1.

when the faithful made complaint, said any thing respecting his own power, he would not truly have been the teacher of meekness." And then he goes on to deduce a lesson for his own conduct from the example of this "Shepherd of the Church," and "Prince of the Apostles."<sup>6</sup>

In St. Peter's conduct, again, at the Council of Jerusalem, the ancient writers remark upon the moderation of St. Peter, but see no signs that he was wanting in authority. St. Chrysostom observes upon the insubordination of those inferior members of the Church, who raised the question; and upon the forbearance of the Apostles, who suffered it to be debated. "Great effrontery this of the Pharisees, that even after faith they set up the law, and will not obey the Apostles." And he refers especially to St. Peter, as having allowed the discussion to have its course, and having then stepped in with authority. "Observe, he first permits the question to be moved in the Church, and then speaks."<sup>7</sup> So also does Tertullian refer to him, as having decided the question by his sentence. "In that dispute whether the law should be kept, Peter, first of all, inspired by the Spirit, and having spoken of the call of the Gentiles, 'And now,' he says, 'why have you tempted God, by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? But by the grace of Christ we believe that we shall be saved even as they.' This sentence both loosed those parts of the Law which were given up, and gave obligation to those which were continued."<sup>8</sup>

It has been alleged, that St. Peter's superiority hardly consorts with the position of St. James, who speaks last, and in a manner which plainly implies authority. And that St. James was Bishop at Jerusalem<sup>9</sup> is referred to by St. Chrysostom, as the reason why he thus closes the discussion. But there is nothing in this circumstance which implies him to have been superior to St. Peter, who had first laid down "the rule, to which James and all the elders acceded."<sup>10</sup> St. James, it must be remembered, was not one of the three leading Apostles; it is dubious if he was one of the Twelve. St. Chry-

<sup>6</sup> Epist. Lib. xi. 45. p. 1129. <sup>7</sup> Hom. in Acta. xxxii. 2. <sup>8</sup> De Pudic. xxi.

<sup>9</sup> Hom. xxxiii. 1. <sup>10</sup> St. Jerom. in Epis. St. August. lxxv. 7.

sostom, after observing that Our Lord, by the charge to "feed My sheep," "putteth into St. Peter's hands the chief authority among the brethren," asks the question, "how, then, did James receive the chair at Jerusalem?" His answer is, that Christ "appointed Peter teacher not of the chair, but of the world."<sup>11</sup> The circumstance, then, which gave St. James peculiar weight on this occasion was, that in the Council of Jerusalem a concession was made by the Jewish Christians to their Gentile brethren. The accordance, therefore, of the Bishop of Jerusalem was the ratification of a compact, which was necessary to the public peace. St. Peter had laid down the principle which was to be adopted, by a reference to the peculiar revelation which had been made to himself. St. James's words were a public pledge that the rule should no longer be resisted.

The position of St. James, as Bishop of Jerusalem, seems to account for a remarkable variation in the order commonly observed in respect to the names of the Apostles. St. Paul, when informing the Galatians of his visit to Jerusalem, speaks (at least in the received text) of having seen "James, Cephas, and John." Perhaps it is the unusual order here observed, which has led many both of the Fathers, and of the best manuscripts, either to omit, or postpone the first name; but allow the reading to be correct, and why should not St. Paul mention the Bishop of the City which he visited, before the two chief of the Apostles whom he saw there? But in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where St. Paul often mentions St. Peter's name, the order observed always points out his priority. "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." "It was not to prefer himself before St. Peter that he set his name last, but as preferring Peter greatly before himself. For he speaks in the ascending scale."<sup>12</sup> Such passages occur not less than four<sup>13</sup> times in this Epistle. Observe the notice which is given of another by St. Chrysostom. "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a woman, even as the other Apostles, and as the

<sup>11</sup> In Joh. Hom. lxxxviii. This entirely agrees with the statement of St. Clement, Eus. ii. 1.

<sup>12</sup> St. Chrys. Hom. iii. 4, on I Cor. <sup>13</sup> I Cor. i. 12; iii. 22; ix. 5; xv. 5.

brethren of the Lord and Cephas. Observe his wisdom. He has put the chief last. For that is the place for laying down one's strongest topics. It was not so remarkable to show that the rest would do this, as that it was done by the chief combatant, by him who had been intrusted with the Keys of Heaven. But he does not mention Peter alone, but all of them, as though to say, whether you seek the inferior sort or the leaders, you have examples from all. For Our Lord's brethren, when they were freed from their previous unbelief, were among the most eminent, though they did not equal the Apostles. So that he has set them down in the midst; the highest on either side."<sup>14</sup>

That St. Paul should give this prominence to St. Peter's name is the more material, because the necessity of defending himself against Judaizing teachers led him to insist rather on the validity of his own mission, than on the unity of the Apostolic College. Yet the early writers, though recognizing his more abundant labours, and though impregnated themselves with the spirit of his theology, understand him to have attributed the same pre-eminence to St. Peter, which his companion, St. Luke, assigns to that Apostle in the Acts. To this conclusion they were not led certainly by any national prejudice in favour of the Apostle of the Circumcision, since the great writers of the early Church were all of Gentile origin. Yet, when St. Paul speaks of going up "to see Peter," they all understand this to have been a mark of respect, paid by one whom Our Lord had added to their number by immediate appointment, to the chief of the Apostles. "He goes up to Jerusalem, as he himself relates," says Tertullian, "as a matter of duty, and through the obligation of their common faith and preaching."<sup>15</sup> Marius Victorinus, in the fourth century, observes: "After three years, says he, I came to Jerusalem; then he adds the cause, to see Peter. For if the foundation of the Church was laid on Peter, as is said in the Gospel, Paul, to whom all things had been revealed, knew that he was bound to see Peter, as one to whom so great an authority had been given by Christ, not to

<sup>14</sup> I Cor. Hom. xxi. 2.<sup>15</sup> De Præscrip. xxiii.



learn anything from him.”<sup>16</sup> So Hilary the Deacon, and St. Jerome, commenting on the same passage: “It was fit that he should desire to see Peter, because he was the first of the Apostles to whom Our Saviour had delegated the care of the Churches, not that he might learn anything of him.”<sup>17</sup> And again: He did not go “for the sake of learning, since he had himself the same authority for his teaching, but that he might do honour to the first Apostle.”<sup>18</sup>

The same was the judgment of St. Chrysostom and Theodoret in the East. St. Peter, says the first, “was the chosen one of the Apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band; on this account, also, St. Paul went up upon a time to inquire of him rather than the others.”<sup>19</sup> And again: “Being in no want of Peter, nor of his oral teaching, but being equal with him in rank, for I will say no more here, he yet goes up to him, as to a greater and elder. And the cause of his journey thither, is solely to see Peter.”<sup>20</sup> And Theodoret on the same passage: “Not wanting doctrines from men, as having received them from the God of all, he pays suitable honour to the chief.” Theodoret again writes to St. Leo: “If Paul, the preacher of the truth, the trumpet of the Holy Spirit, hastened to the great Peter, to carry from him the determination to those at Antioch, who disputed as to living under the Law, how much more do we, poor and humble, run to your Apostolic throne, to receive from you healing for the wounds of the Churches!”<sup>21</sup>

These writers, then, attributed to St. Paul an immediate and independent commission from Our Lord, such as He bestowed upon all the Apostles, but they represent him to have recognized that priority of St. Peter, which was designed to secure the unity of the Apostolic body. “For according to St. Matthew’s account,” says St. Pacian, “the Lord spoke first to Peter, that is, to one, that He might lay the foundations of unity in a single person.”<sup>22</sup> And again St.

<sup>16</sup> Com. in Gal. i. 18, Mai Coll. Nov. Tom. iii. as quoted in Allies’s St. Peter’s Name and Office, p. 164.

<sup>17</sup> St. Amb. vol ii. App. p. 213.

<sup>18</sup> St. Jerom. vol. iv. 1. p. 236.

<sup>19</sup> In Joh. Hom. lxxxviii.

<sup>20</sup> In Gal. i. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Ep. 113, vol. iii. 984.

<sup>22</sup> Con. Nov. Ep. 3, Bib. Pat. iv. 311.

Optatus: "There was one chair, in which sat Peter, the head of all the Apostles, that unity might be preserved by all, and that the other Apostles might not claim for themselves each his individual chair."<sup>23</sup> Hilary the Deacon, while assigning to St. Paul a superiority in the particular mission to the Gentiles, contrasts it with the superiority which belonged to St. Peter in the Church at large. Paul "mentions Peter alone, and compares him to himself, because he had received a primacy for the founding of the Church, while he was himself elected in like manner to have a primacy in founding the Churches of the Gentiles." And again: "As he assigns associates to Peter, namely, the illustrious men among the Apostles; so he joins Barnabas to himself, who had been associated with him by divine appointment: yet he claims the grace of the Primacy, as granted by God to himself alone, as to Peter alone was it granted among the Apostles."<sup>24</sup>

In no point, however, do the ancient writers differ more remarkably from many modern Commentators, than in their mode of understanding St. Paul's rebuke to St. Peter at Antioch. It has often been forgotten, that St. Peter's fault, as Tertullian expresses it, was "an error of conduct and not of teaching;"<sup>25</sup> and such, therefore, as an inferior, much more one endowed with the same inspiration as himself, might fitly reprove. For St. Paul was not instructing St. Peter respecting any point on which he was misinformed, but was merely appealing to the principles which St. Peter had himself taught, but with which his conduct was not perfectly consistent. And St. Paul's reference to the incident would rather imply, that he had addressed himself to the person of most weight, as being fully confident of the justice of his remonstrances. Many writers, however, both ancient and modern, have supposed the incident to militate against St. Peter's Primacy; and it has served to bring out in the most conspicuous manner their difference of judgment. For while modern writers have deduced from it conclusions almost inconsistent with St. Peter's inspiration, the ancients, as St.

<sup>23</sup> De Schis. Don. ii. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Comm. in Gal. ii. 7-10. St. Amb. ii. App. p. 216.

<sup>25</sup> De Præscrip. xxiii.

Chrysostom, St. Jerome, Origen, St. Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian,<sup>26</sup> have attempted to explain it away as a mere collusive scene, agreed upon for the preservation of peace between the two Apostles. To this they were especially led, says St. Jerome, "in order to answer Porphyry, who accused Paul of forwardness, for venturing to blame the chief of the Apostles."<sup>27</sup> The ancient notion of the relation between these two great Apostles is shown equally by the answer and the attack; and not less so by the more natural explanation of the occurrence which is given by St. Cyprian. "Not even Peter, whom the Lord chose as first, and on whom He built His Church, insolently claimed anything for himself, when Paul afterwards reasoned with him on the subject of circumcision; nor took upon him to say in an arrogant manner, that he had the Primacy, and ought rather to be obeyed by those who were less ripe, and later than himself; but he readily admitted the counsel of truth, and gave easy access to that legitimate consideration which St. Paul adduced."<sup>28</sup>

If we are to understand Scripture, then, as it was understood by the early Christians, we must suppose that the relation of St. Peter to the Apostle of the Gentiles, does not lead to any other conclusion than that which is evidenced by his position towards the residue of the original Twelve. We have no Scriptural record, indeed, of their intercourse, like that which the earlier part of the Book of Acts supplies respecting the conduct of the whole body; and St. Paul has little occasion to mention St. Peter in his Epistles, save when he is compelled to vindicate the independence of his own commission. Yet even these allusions substantiate, rather than derogate, from St. Peter's Primacy; and the references which are made to him, when the Apostle of the Gentiles denies that his commission is derived from men, show who was the individual, from whom men might imagine that it was derived. And considering that St. Paul's writings gave a tone to the theology of the early Christians, and that the Gentile Churches were mainly built up by his labours, had his com-

<sup>26</sup> The passages are referred to in the note to the Oxford Transl. of Tertullian de Præscrip. xxiv.

<sup>27</sup> Inter Ep. S. Aug. Ep. lxxv. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Epist. lxxi. 3.

mission superseded that of the chief Apostle of the circumcision, we should not find those early and wide-spread references to St. Peter's office as the rock of the Church, which abound in all ancient writers. Had there been any rivalry between these two great Apostles, the Gentile Church would hardly have left such expressions as the following, as her commentary on those passages of Scripture, which express St. Peter's office, and illustrate his conduct to his brethren. For we read that he was "the Rock of the Church,"<sup>29</sup> "the Rock on which the Church should be built,"<sup>30</sup> "underlying the Church's building,"<sup>31</sup> "receiving on himself the building of the Church,"<sup>32</sup> "the firm Rock,"<sup>33</sup> "the Rock, which the proud gates of Hell do not overcome,"<sup>34</sup> "the most solid Rock,"<sup>35</sup> "he whom Our Lord admitted to a participation of His own title, The Rock,"<sup>36</sup> "the foundation second from Christ,"<sup>37</sup> "the Church's great foundation,"<sup>38</sup> "the foundation and basis,"<sup>39</sup> "founding the Church by his firmness,"<sup>40</sup> "the support of the Church,"<sup>41</sup> "the Apostle in whom is the Church's support,"<sup>42</sup> "the support of the faith,"<sup>43</sup> "the pillar of the Church,"<sup>44</sup> "the Rock and foundation of the Catholic Church, and the basis of the orthodox faith."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>29</sup> St. Hilary on Matth. xvi. 7, on Psalm cxxxi. 4, and de Trin. vi. 20. St. Greg. Nazianzen Orat. xxvi. p. 453. [Paris.] St. Amb. 1st. Hymn, referred to by St. Aug. Retrac. I. 21. Epiph. in Ancor. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Tertull. de Monog. viii. Origen on Ps. i. in Eus. Hist. vi. 25. Cyprian, Ep. lxxi. ad Quintum, and lxxv. from Firmilian.

<sup>31</sup> St. Basil cont. Evnom. II. 4. St. Zeno, II. Trac. xiii. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Id.

<sup>33</sup> Epiphan. Hær. lix. 7.

<sup>34</sup> St. Aug. in Ps. con. par. Donati. Leo, Ser. 98. <sup>35</sup> Theodore, Ep. 77.

<sup>36</sup> Maximus of Turin, Sermon. pro nat. Pet. et Paul.

<sup>37</sup> S. Greg. Naz. in hom. archieratico inserta.

<sup>38</sup> Origen on Exod. Hom. v. 4.

<sup>39</sup> Gallican Sacramentary, edited by Mabillon, T. i. Mus. Ital. p. 343. Synod of Ephesus, Art. 3. Harduin, vol. i. p. 1478.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Chrysologus, Sermon. 154.

<sup>41</sup> St. Ambrose on Virginity, xvi. 105.

<sup>42</sup> St. Ambrose on Luke, B. iv. n. 70.

<sup>43</sup> St. Chrysost. hom. on debtor of 10,000 talents, vol. iii. p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Philip, Legate of the Apos. Sec. Council of Eph. Ac. iii. Harduin, i. p. 1478.

<sup>45</sup> Council of Chalcedon, Hard. ii. p. 345. The above references are taken from Passaglia de Prærogativis B. Petri. ii. 4, 63. They are quoted also by Allies, St. Peter's Name and Office, p. 15. Both these works have been made use of in this and the previous chapter.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE BISHOP OF ROME ST. PETER'S SUCCESSOR.

It has been shown in the preceding chapter, that St. Peter's conduct, as recorded in Scripture, was such as we might expect from the Primate of the Church. No particular in his acts or treatment negatives such an idea; and that he was affirmed to possess this power was the universal understanding of those first ages, from which we have received the Scriptures. But had he any successors in the Primacy; and if so, did his successors exercise the power which the Apostle had possessed? These two questions must be answered in order.

Had St. Peter any successors? Now, in making this inquiry we must remember that the authority which the Apostles left to their successors, was declared by their acts, and not by their assertions. As the first generations of men were content to bring up children, by whom the earth should be inherited, without leaving any record of the bequest; so the Apostles appear to have thought it enough to provide persons to administer the powers which they possessed, and thus to have handed down the government of the Church by actual transference. The authority which St. Paul committed to Timothy and Titus is only incidentally noticed; and no clear intimation occurs whether it was designed to be permanent or temporary. St. Ignatius shows that the Sacrament of Our Lord's Body could not be consecrated without authority from the Bishop, and thus indicates the circumstance which has led to the whole system of the Church; but how acceptable



would be further details in what manner the first series of Bishops succeeded to the functions of the Apostles. Respecting the filling up even of the chief Sees, and the very names of those who occupied them, our first informant is a person who looked at the Church with the eye of an antiquarian rather than with that of a Christian, and who took interest in searching into those principles as a historian, to which preceding generations had been content to yield practical obedience. But it is only the most distinguished Bishops, who occupied the Patriarchal Sees of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, whose names are recorded even by Eusebius; and he appears to have been satisfied with tracing them up in general to the times of the Apostles, without verifying that most important link, by which Episcopal was bound to Apostolical authority.

This absence of any exact information in other cases gives greater importance to that one instance in which the evidence is complete. For there is one Apostle whose successors have been recorded, and one Church, respecting which it has been thought important to preserve the line of the Episcopate, and that not merely as a matter of antiquarian observation, but by those who desired to produce an authority to which they could appeal in questions of doctrine. Now, this Church is the Church of Rome, and this Apostle was St. Peter. To find a witness to their pretensions we need not go down centuries after the time of the Apostles; we have it in the testimony of St. Irenæus, the most important writer, perhaps, in the second century. In a passage, part whereof has been already cited, he refers to the successors of the Apostles, as a living witness to the Gospel which they had taught. His own language and origin were likely to turn his thoughts towards the Eastern Church, for he wrote in Greek, and had sat at the feet of Polycarp, St. John's disciple. A letter,<sup>1</sup> moreover, from the Church at Lyons, over which he presided, to the Churches of Phrygia and Asia, shows that the associations of his hearers also were with the East, though they lived in Gaul. To what Church, then, does he refer, when he has occasion to appeal to Apostolic authority? "Since it

<sup>1</sup> Eus. Hist. Eccl. v. 1.

would be a long task," he says, "in such a volume as this to enumerate the successions of all the Churches, therefore, by stating the tradition of that Church, which is the greatest, most ancient, and best known of all—the Church I mean, which was founded and constituted at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul—and by declaring the faith, which it announces to mankind, and which comes through the successions of Bishops even to our days, we confound all those, who in whatever way, whether from self-conceit, vain-glory, or blindness and ill-judgment, separate themselves from the Body. For to this Church, by reason of its superior principality, must every Church resort, that is, the faithful everywhere; seeing that in it, ever, by those who are everywhere, the Apostolical tradition has been preserved. The Blessed Apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, put the administration of its Episcopate in the hands of Linus. Of this Linus St. Paul makes mention in his Epistles to Timothy. To Linus succeeds Anacletus. After him, in the third place from the Apostles, the Episcopate is allotted to Clement, who also had seen the Blessed Apostles. To this Clement succeeds Evaristus, and to Evaristus Alexander, and then sixth after the Apostles is Xystus appointed, and after him Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred. Then came Pius, after him Anicetus, who was succeeded by Soter, and now the Episcopate is held by Eleutherus, the twelfth in succession from the Apostles. In this order, and through this succession, has the tradition of the Apostles, which was preserved in the Church, and the teaching of the truth, come down to us."<sup>2</sup>

It may be objected, perhaps, that as St. Paul is referred to in this passage as well as St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome can claim no peculiar succession from the latter. St. Peter had received from Our Lord the general commission of an Apostle; independently of that peculiar function which resulted from his being associated with Our Lord Himself, the true Rock of the Church. It was this last circumstance which made him the centre of unity to the whole body, so that his co-operation was necessary to the whole body, while the co-

<sup>2</sup> Adv. Hær. iii. 3, 2.

operation of no other individual was necessary to him. Since St. Paul, then, concurred with St. Peter in handing down authority to the Roman Church, it may be said that the commission bestowed upon it cannot have been that which was peculiar to St. Peter, but only that which these two Apostles shared together.

Such is the objection. It proceeds upon the supposition, that St. Peter's power consisted of two portions, one of which expired with himself, while he handed on the other. Either, then, we ought to find some ancient statement that his functions were understood to be thus divided; or such an arrangement, though not expressed in words, must have been implied in the manner in which his office was dealt with. But neither of these suppositions is maintainable. Our Lord's promise of His continual presence, the conduct of the Apostles themselves, and the belief of their first disciples, had led the ancient Christians to the conclusion, that the commission bestowed upon the Twelve was given for the permanent guidance and administration of the Church. But nothing indicates that the commission of the other Eleven was supposed to be more durable than his, whom St. Matthew terms the First Apostle. No ancient Church-writer attempts to discriminate between his powers, and to show that the one part of them was merely personal, the other transferable. Such a mode of speaking occurs indeed in Tertullian,<sup>3</sup> but it is in his attacks upon the Church, after he had joined the Montanists, and is directed against Apostolic, not Primatial authority. No doubt it has been found convenient in later times to discriminate the several ideas, which were involved in St. Peter's office, and to point out what was peculiar to himself, what common to his brethren. The last was that which belongs to all Bishops, the power of performing spiritual acts, which is conferred by consecration. The first was that which arose out of the relation which he bore to his brethren, and which has given occasion to that gradation of rank, which regulates the exercise of spiritual functions. That which is common to all Bishops has since been called the power of *Order*; and *Mission* has been the name given to

<sup>3</sup> De Pudicitia. xxi.

that authority, which arranges when, how, and where the power of Order shall be used. In the ancient Church this authority was ordinarily exercised by the Metropolitans and Patriarchs; and the larger part of it was finally concentrated in the chief Patriarch, who represented St. Peter. But whatever power of this kind the Primacy may have possessed, it was not so discriminated from the general functions of the First Apostle, as to give any historical ground for the assertion that his successor inherited the one and not the other.

Nor is any such supposition implied by the manner in which his office was transmitted. It was natural that St. Irenæus should refer to the fact that St. Paul co-operated in the founding of the Roman Church, because he was not only appealing to its authority, but referring to its testimony. And considering that St. Paul was the only Apostle, who in after times was likely to be contrasted with St. Peter, there may have been providential reasons for their union in this action. But St. Peter's commission was certainly understood to have been handed down undivided to the Bishops of Rome; for though St. Paul is universally said to have been concerned in the founding of this Church, yet it was always called the See of St. Peter. So it is styled by St. Cyprian, and universally by later writers.

“Sedes Roma Petri, quæ pastoralis honoris  
Facta caput mundo, quicquid non possidet armis  
Religione tenet.”<sup>4</sup>

When describing the election of Cornelius, St. Cyprian says that it happened when “the place of Fabianus, that is, *the place of Peter*, was vacant.”<sup>5</sup> And Tertullian, at the end of the second century, though affirming, as St. Irenæus does, that the Church of Rome had been raised by the labours, and ennobled by the martyrdom of these two Apostles,<sup>6</sup> yet refers the appointment of its Bishop to St. Peter alone. He speaks of St. Clement, who was certainly a contemporary of the Apostles (it does not appear clearly whether Tertullian imagined him to be the first Bishop after the Apostles,) as having received his Episcopate from St. Peter.<sup>7</sup> Ter-

<sup>4</sup> S. Prosper de Ingratis. cap. ii. Bib. Patr. viii. 106.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. lv. 7. Antoniano.

<sup>6</sup> De Præscrip. xxxvi.

<sup>7</sup> Id. xxxii.

tullian is borne out by Eusebius, so far as concerns the identification of the Roman Episcopate with the succession of St. Peter, though he also records the martyrdom<sup>8</sup> of both Apostles at Rome. For he speaks of Linus as the "first Bishop after Peter."<sup>9</sup> The same position is assigned to St. Peter in the curious documents which were current under the name of Clement, and which show the general belief as early—probably as the end of the second century. So, too, Lactantius, in later times, when mentioning the martyrdom of the two Apostles at Rome, speaks of St. Peter particularly, as having "raised a temple there to God."<sup>10</sup>

Since the Church of Rome, then, was spoken of in ancient times as the See of St. Peter, though St. Paul also was one of its founders; the commission transmitted by the other Apostle must surely have been characteristic and peculiar. For why should this Church have been so especially associated with the name of St. Peter, unless there was something specific in the commission which he transmitted? Its connexion with him is not sufficiently accounted for by the opinion, which is maintained with considerable plausibility by some recent<sup>11</sup> German critics, that St. Peter had been the first Apostle who visited Rome; this being the "other place" to which he went, after his escape from the hands of Herod. Such a supposition accords well enough with the early statements respecting his ministry at Rome in the time of Claudius;<sup>12</sup> but the appointment of its Episcopate took place evidently during that last visit, which was followed by his martyrdom. Priority of time was not all which was intended; as we may infer from the notice which Dionysius of Corinth gives of the visit paid by these two Apostles to that city on their way to Rome. Corinth had been originally converted by St. Paul; but Dionysius<sup>13</sup> puts St. Peter first, as one of the two who had "planted" the Church at Corinth, and thereby associated it with the Church of Rome.

The evidence which has been already adduced is sufficient

<sup>8</sup> Hist. Eccl. ii. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Id. iii. 4.

<sup>10</sup> De Mortibus Pers. ii.

<sup>11</sup> Vid. Windischman's *Vindiciæ Petrinæ*. Ratisbon, 1836. Thiersch's *Kirche im Apost. Zeitalter*, Erlangen, 1852. p. 97.

<sup>12</sup> Eus. ii. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Eus. ii. 25.



to show how entirely groundless are the doubts which have been thrown out, whether St. Peter ever visited Rome. It is difficult to understand how such a question can have been seriously raised, since there is scarcely an ancient writer who does not either assert, or allude to his residence in that city. "That St. Peter was at Rome, and for some time had his seat there, we affirm without hesitation," says Cave, "with the whole body of the ancients."<sup>14</sup> But another expedient has been devised for neutralizing any peculiar claim, which the Bishops of Rome might derive from St. Peter's commission—the assertion, namely, that all Bishops are equally his successors. The notion mentioned above was, that his successors at Rome inherited nothing but his ordinary commission as an Apostle; this would imply that his office of Primate was bequeathed to the whole Episcopate. And this has been supposed to be the meaning of St. Cyprian's statement, that the principle of unity was expressed in the commission to St. Peter;—each Bishop viewed by himself being a full representation and successor of St. Peter.<sup>15</sup>

Such an interpretation, however, both fails of doing justice to St. Cyprian's argument, and is inconsistent with his own express words. His argument is, that Our Lord laid the foundation of His Church in one, "in order to manifest unity." He must be referring, then, to some method by which the several Apostles, the foundations of the Church, might themselves be exempted from division. With what purpose otherwise does he introduce the mention of the other Apostles, which would be superfluous, if he were alluding only to the authority of each Bishop over his spiritual subjects? "Certainly the other Apostles also were what Peter was, endued with an equal fellowship both of honour and power; but a commencement is made from unity, that the Church may be set before us as one." The words have an

<sup>14</sup> *Historia Lit.* vol. i. p. 7. Lardner comes to the same conclusion; and sums up the evidence by saying, "It is not for our honour, nor our interest, either as Christians, or Protestants, to deny the truth of events, ascertained by early and well-attested tradition." We may now add the testimony of Hippolytus, in the recently discovered *Philosophumena*, vi. 20, p. 176.

<sup>15</sup> Note to *Oxf. Trans. of St. Cyprian's Treatises*, v. 4.

obvious meaning, if they refer to the maintenance of unity among themselves; but how does the fact, that a commencement is made from unity, affect that relation, which is owed by each Christian to his own spiritual Father? And so the thing was certainly understood by other writers, who carried on St. Cyprian's argument. The reason why the foundation of the Church was laid in one, says St. Optatus, was, "that the other Apostles might not assert each his own individual chair, but that he might be reckoned a schismatic, who against this one chair set up another."<sup>16</sup> And so St. Jerome: "Therefore, one is chosen among the Twelve, that by the appointment of a head, occasions of division might be avoided."<sup>17</sup>

Such an interpretation, then, of St. Cyprian's words neither does justice to their own force, nor accords with the language of other writers. But, further, it is contrary to the fact to say, that St. Cyprian speaks of all Bishops as occupying equally "the chair of St. Peter." On the contrary, he applies the term especially to the See of Rome, both when he calls the "place of Fabianus," "the place of Peter;"<sup>18</sup> and still more distinctly when he complains that certain parties who had gone from Carthage to Rome, "venture to sail to the See of Peter, and to the principal Church, whence Sacerdotal unity has arisen."<sup>19</sup> And considering that the Church of Rome is so closely connected with the Apostle who founded it, such a mode of speaking, as has been attributed to St. Cyprian, would tell in its favour, rather than against it. For to speak of all Bishops as successors of St. Peter, would imply that the rest of the Twelve had merely a life-office, and would thus concentrate the whole provision for the future prospects of the Church in the succession of its Primate.

Certainly there is one peculiarity in regard to St. Peter's succession, which suggests another relation between the chief Apostle and his Master. Though we know in general that all mankind have descended from Adam, yet Our Lord was the only individual of His generation, whose earthly parentage can be traced to our common ancestor. In Him began a

<sup>16</sup> De Scism. Don. ii. 2.<sup>17</sup> Adv. Jov. i. p. 168.<sup>18</sup> Ep. lv. 7.<sup>19</sup> Ep. lix. 19, Cornelio.

new family, the creation of a second seed, and He appointed Twelve princes of His spiritual progeny, after the number of the twelve sons of Jacob. Their succession continues to the present day; but there is one only of the Twelve, and that the one whom Our Lord associated to His own office by the name which He bestowed upon him, the line of whose progeny has been recorded. Even if we could complete the succession of those Patriarchal Sees, in which we have the assistance of Eusebius, yet two of them, Alexandria and Antioch, owed their existence either to St. Peter's disciple, St. Mark, or to his own temporary residence,<sup>20</sup> while the succession at Jerusalem came to an end with the failure of the Jewish Church, and even this had not been the succession of St. James, but had been instituted after his death by some of the other Apostles. No Bishop, therefore, in the present day can derive his spiritual ancestry from St. Andrew or St. John, or can be sure that any one, who has received succession from any of the Eleven Apostles, has laid hands upon him. But there are Bishops in every quarter of the globe who can trace the succession of their office to the chief Apostle, and prove that their gifts are derived from the imposition of his hands. Thus is the chair of St. Peter the only one which can be shown to have its representatives even at the present day; and as Our Lord was the only known representative of the first Adam, so St. Peter's progeny alone can trace their spiritual descent from the Second.

In this respect, then, it may perhaps be said, that every Bishop represents St. Peter, because no Bishop at present existing in the world can trace his line of parentage to any other Apostle. But this circumstance by no means excludes the claim of that which was peculiarly called the See of St. Peter. When a Donatist assailed St. Augustin under pre-

<sup>20</sup> This is affirmed of Antioch by St. Chrysostom, when resident there: "This is one of the privileges of our city, that it received at the beginning for its teacher the first of the Apostles." But he says, "We did not keep him to the end, but yielded him to imperial Rome."\* He has elsewhere said, that Christ, after his denial, had "restored him to his former honour, and put into his hands the presidency of the Universal Church."†

\* Vol. iii. 70. In Inscrip. Act. ii. 6. † Vol. ii. 309. De Pæn. Hom. v. 2

tence of a peculiar revelation, he replied by reference to the general promises to the Church, as ascertained by a perpetual action through the line of her ministry. And how does he consider that this ought to be traced? The Donatist Bishop had stated the succession, according to which he claimed to minister. St. Augustin replies: "If the order of the Bishops, who succeed one another, is to be considered, with how much greater certainty and benefit do we reckon from Peter himself, to whom, as representing the whole Church, Our Lord said, 'On this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.' For to Peter succeeded Linus"<sup>21</sup>—and then he gives a list of the Bishops of Rome, till he brings them down to Anastatius, with whom he was contemporary. And so, when giving an account of his faith to a Manichæan, he says: "To say nothing of that wisdom, which you do not believe to reside in the Catholic Church, there are many other things which most justly hold me in her bosom. I am held to it by the consent of tribes and nations; I am held by an authority, which began in miracles, has been nursed by hope, increased by charity, confirmed by age; I am held by that succession of the Priesthood, which extends from the seat of Peter the Apostle, to whom Our Lord committed His sheep to be fed after His resurrection, even to the present Pontiff."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Epis. liii. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Cont. Epis. Manichæi. 5.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE BISHOP OF ROME POSSESSED A PRIMACY IN ANTE-NICENE TIMES.

IN the last chapter it has been shown that St. Peter left successors, and that who those successors are, cannot be disputed. For the line of his descent has its witness at Canterbury as well as at Westminster; it is the one only line, through which any Bishop can prove his unbroken succession from the Holy Apostles. But have St. Peter's successors always exercised the powers which were committed to himself? Has the Bishop of Rome always acted as Primate?

Here lies the great difficulty probably, which has been felt respecting the Roman pretensions. No doubt a certain superiority belonged to St. Peter, and his name was associated in early times with the Church of Rome. Scripture is express in declaring the first; and the second lies on the face of ecclesiastical history. But his successors do not appear to have taken that part during some centuries, which we should naturally expect from the Church's leaders. Every one knows who was Emperor of Rome after Augustus; but though all writers agree that St. Peter consecrated a Bishop there before his martyrdom, it is disputed whether Linus<sup>1</sup> or Clemens was the name of his immediate successor. How could this have been the case, it is asked, if the Bishop of Rome had acted as the head of the Christian community? The very fact that the Church was an aggressive body, which

<sup>1</sup> St. Jerome seems to have supposed it to be Linus "tametsi plerique Latinorum secundum post Petrum Apostolum putent fuisse Clementem."—*Cat. Scrip. Eccles.* vol. iv. p. 2. p. 107. [Martianay.]



was carrying on a successful warfare against the powers of this world, must have given greater prominence to its chief. Speak of the conquests of the Goths or the Huns, and we are reminded at once of Alaric or Attila; but no early Bishops of Rome made their names famous by any achievements. None of them wrote anything but a few letters, till we come to the great name of St. Leo, three centuries and a half after the death of the Apostles: and which of his predecessors produced that effect upon his age, for which Gregory VII. or Innocent III. are remembered?

This is a common objection to the statement, that the Bishop of Rome inherited the Primacy of St. Peter. But does not such an argument imply a forgetfulness of the truth, that it was by supernatural, and not natural means that the Church was extended? Had the preachers of the Gospel designed to build up a system according to ordinary laws, and by human efforts, it would have been essential to their success to maintain that concentrated action, which implies the perpetual interference of a chief. Who that chief was, must have been as obvious as that the Vandals were headed by Genseric, or the Romans by Belisarius. But it has been shown already<sup>2</sup> that the Church was designed to interpenetrate society, without destroying its existing relations, or superseding the authority of its temporal rulers. The Church's influence extended itself, like some law of nature, by a secret, silent, invisible attraction: while the very absence of distinguished men showed the more clearly that her progress was attributable to a divine efficacy. During the second century, the Christians had no leaders of great eminence; they had but few writers of merit, and not a single crowned head in their ranks. And yet they were a mighty people, who spread throughout the earth. Pliny's language would make us doubt whether the Church had any internal regulation or system of government at all; and yet Christian testimony shows how fixed and definite was its inward organization. For it had its princes, who ruled in the place of the Apostles; but because their authority was not expressed

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Cap. iv.

in any legislative form, and did not interfere with the arrangements of society, there was nothing which, to a stranger, indicated their influence. It lay exclusively in the power of granting or withholding those sacramental gifts, of which the rest of the world thought nothing; and what was there, therefore, to make it felt beyond the Church's limits? And yet the power, which this authority conferred upon them, was real and important; and in after times exercised a weighty influence over the affairs of nations.

If we hear so little, then, of other Bishops during the first growth of the Church, why should it surprise us, that the Bishop of Rome was scarcely more prominent than his neighbours? The Church was plainly an organic body, growing up by some secret principle of inward vitality, and not indebted, like the kingdoms of this world, to the talents or enterprise of individual leaders. The stone, which had been "cut out without hands," "became a great mountain." Its increase, like its origin, was the result of some supernatural law. Now, what reason have we to assume, that during all this period the successor of St. Peter was not discharging the same office, which had been performed during his life-time by the chief of the Apostles? St. Peter's Primacy, according to the statements of the ancient Fathers, was designed to maintain the unity of the Apostolic body. We hear nothing of it, therefore, except when the Apostles acted together; so that circumstances indicated which of them was foremost. Such a power, then, might exist without discovering itself, till events arose to call it into action. The Church was, as yet, like a human body in its infant state; it had received an organization, in which powers lay dormant, which at a later period were to awaken into life. As it would be unreasonable, then, to doubt that a child possesses the capacity of reason, because it does not, as yet, give utterance to its thoughts; so the Church may have had a centre of unity, though, as yet, there was nothing to call out its services and manifest its effect. The slightest observation shows with how little of scientific analysis and definition the doctrines of faith were as yet expressed; there was the simplicity and purity of a child-like belief, but not that ripeness of knowledge which was derived

from the labours of the great Fathers of the fourth century, and which has since given fuller shape to the Creed. And yet there was the most lively conviction of the unity of the whole body; all its members were held together by an internal cohesion, it had the same faith and the same communion, which was maintained by an uninterrupted intercourse among its most distant parts. Hence the tenacity, with which it retained its doctrine and discipline. "The Church, though scattered throughout the whole world, yet guards diligently this teaching, and this faith, as if it inhabited a single mansion. And this is its belief, as if it had one soul, and the same heart; and this it preaches, teaches, and delivers down accordantly, as though it had a single mouth."<sup>3</sup>

These considerations lead to the following conclusions; which must be borne in mind when we consider what historical evidence can be adduced for a Primacy before the time of St. Cyprian.

1st. The antecedent probability is in favour of the Primacy, and not against it. This point does not appear to be commonly recognized: it seems usually supposed, that the early Bishops of Rome may be assumed not to have possessed any power, which they cannot be plainly proved to have exercised. But since it has been shown that a Primacy was certainly promised to St. Peter, and since it is clear that the Bishop of Rome was styled St. Peter's successor, there is reason for expecting that the office which he inherited would imply a precedence over his brethren. Such a mode of arguing has no weight, of course, with Presbyterians, who deny that Our Lord had given a permanent commission to any of His Apostles; but it ought to tell upon Churchmen, who allow that the Apostles govern the Church in the persons of their successors. For if the whole Episcopate has inherited the Apostolic office, why not the successor of St. Peter? And if Peter be present in the Bishop of Rome, is he not still the Primate? Instead of assuming, therefore, that the Bishop of Rome was *not* Primate, unless it can be proved that he *was* so, we ought to assume that he *was* Primate, unless it can be proved that he was *not*. The promise to St. Peter, and the

<sup>3</sup> St. Irenæus, I. x. 2.

testimony of the Church, justify us in assuming such a thing, unless the contrary can be demonstrated.

2ndly. The Primacy was only one of those institutions which were appointed by Our Lord, and there is no reason, therefore, why its operation should be looked for, to the exclusion of the rest. Our Lord chose Twelve Apostles, who were to extend His Kingdom throughout the world, and the whole complex system of the Church was the result of their words and actions. No doubt their relations towards one another were modified by the existence of that Primacy, which maintained their internal union. But they had each of them their relations also towards their several disciples; and hence arose the obligations of the Bishop, the Presbyter, and the layman, towards one another. As time went on, the system of the Church became more and more dependent on its centre—the Church's security against those worldly powers which threatened to absorb her, was found to depend on the opportunity of ready recurrence to the central authority. So soon as Christianity had become the religion of Europe, and the line of the Apostles had passed into those various tribes which made up the new commonwealth of nations, there was the greatest danger lest the unity of the Church should be lost in the diversity of races, and lest her rulers should be so identified with their temporal associates, as to merge the principles of grace in the principles of nature. But this was not the case at an early period. And since the Church was not a worldly system, she did not owe her extension to the sagacity of any single ruler; but her parts grew up gradually, like the arrangements of the British constitution. We need not be surprised, then, if powers displayed themselves in the early Church, which were more or less inconsistent with the full exercise of the Primacy. Such contrary principles must, of necessity, have existed side by side; and time and experience were required, before they could resolve themselves into perfect harmony. But it does not follow, because the Primacy was at times opposed, that those who opposed, denied its existence. Hampden's refusal to pay ship-money was not a denial that England was a monarchy. He appealed only to certain other principles in our constitution, which were



as much a part of the whole, as the crown of its sovereign. This must necessarily be the case when the parts of a complex system have grown up together. A ruler who has established his empire by conquest, may make every thing bend to his will, and say, like Louis XIV. *l'état c'est moi*: but it is otherwise with a power which has arisen gradually from a system of interdependent relations. Such a power must be limited by those other powers with which it is co-existent; it cannot supersede the relations which are due to them, except by common consent; or through the occurrence of such emergencies, as may justify the central authority in sacrificing ordinary rules to the common security.

3rdly.- The Primacy could not be expected to show itself in the Church's opposition to its external assailants, but only in those internal disputes, which regarded the relation of its parts towards one another. It has been asked sometimes, why the authority of the Primate was not employed to put down those various errors which were introduced by Gnostic teachers. But these errors were almost equally opposed by all the leaders of that great confederacy which was called the Church. There was nothing, therefore, to bring out those particular principles which enabled the Church to act together as one man. And even the Arian heresy, though its growth within the Church brought it more especially into opposition to the successor of the first Apostle, yet was not directly an assault upon the Church's unity, and, therefore, did not afford more occasion for the interference of the chief Bishop, than for that of his subordinates. The occasions on which we should expect a direct reference to the Primacy, were those matters of internal arrangement, which affected the uniformity of the Church's practice, and were likely, therefore, to set one Diocese, or one Province, against another. This would have been the effect, no doubt, of every heresy, if it had got possession of any portion of the Church; but heresies were withstood by every sincere believer, not only because they tended in the end to divide the Church, but because from the first they were a perversion of the Gospel.

We must look, then, for the action of the Primacy, not in those questions which affected the very existence of Christi-



anity, and in which the whole body of the Church moved together, but rather in such matters of detail, as had been left open by the Apostles, in which, therefore, a contrariety of practice might lead to division among Christians. Could a dispute have arisen among the Apostles, it would not have concerned the essentials of religion, respecting which they were plainly agreed, but must have turned on those minor questions, on which good men might come to different results. And that which is true of the Apostles, is true in degree respecting their earliest successors. The only points on which they were likely to disagree, were such as did not directly concern the main features of the Gospel, and such, moreover, as had been left unfixed by their inspired predecessors. Such were the relations of the Christian to the elder Covenant, and the rules of discipline within the Church. The main points, therefore, of internal dispute, which arose before the Nicene age, were, first, whether the rules of the Jewish Passover ought to fix the time of the Easter Feast; secondly, whether the Baptism of heretics was valid; thirdly, whether those who fell into deadly sin could be re-admitted to membership in Christ. Now, in respect to all these points, one line of Bishops, and one only, appears to have interfered in different parts of Christendom; the course which they proposed was more or less objected to, and yet in process of time was almost entirely adopted; great opposition was made, as well to the wisdom of their suggestions, as to their harshness in requiring them to be accepted—yet no one denied their right to interfere at all. And these Bishops were the successors of Peter, and the See which they occupied was that of Rome.

1st. The difference respecting Easter had arisen as early as in the time of Polycarp, who came to Rome to discuss the question with Anicetus, soon after the middle of the second century. It revived again in the time of Victor, Bishop of Rome, towards the end of the same century. The dispute was not without its importance, for it was part of that general question respecting the position and independence of the Christian covenant, which had given occasion to much of the teaching of St. Paul. The Apostles had thought it enough to exempt Gentile Christians from keeping the Jewish Law;

but the Church's requirements were gradually increased, till the observance of the Law even by Jewish Christians was prohibited. Such was the case in the time of St. Augustin, when any conformity to the Jewish Law was forbidden under pain of excommunication. In the Church's progress towards this state of things, the abandonment of the Jewish rule respecting Easter was not without significance; and it was also a necessary step towards bringing about unity of action among Christians. On these accounts it was subsequently made a positive rule by the Council of Nice,<sup>4</sup> and the Bishops who assembled in Palestine during the time of Victor, appear likewise to have looked at it as of moment. They imply their wish to observe the same rule with their neighbours, and desire that their letters on the subject may be generally known, that "we may not be chargeable in respect of those who readily deceive their own souls."<sup>5</sup> A similar feeling expressed itself in the 7th Apostolic Canon, which must be referred to some Synod of the same age, and which ordered the deposition of any one of the clergy who celebrated Easter with the Jews.

But though this was the judgment not of the West only, but of Syria and Egypt, a different opinion was prevalent in Asia Minor. Its Bishops were assembled by their Metropolitan, Polycrates of Ephesus, at the desire of the Bishop of Rome; and they maintained that they were justified in their singularity, because they followed the custom of St. John. Such a mode of arguing would have prevented the Church from forbidding the observance of any part of the Jewish Law, for it was all observed by St. James. In later times, therefore, the excuse was not admitted; and from the time of the Council of Nice all who employed it were excluded from communion. The Quartodecimans were dealt with as heretics by the Second General Council (*Canon VII.*) and were specifi-

<sup>4</sup> Sozomen, i. 21. The Council of Nice stated in a letter to the Church at Alexandria, that those who had hitherto kept Easter with the Jews had agreed to keep it henceforth "with the Romans, and with us," &c. *Socrates*, i. 9. From this time, therefore, the Quartodeciman usage was treated as a heresy, as it is declared to be by the 1st. Canon of Antioch, and implied to be by the 7th. Canon of the Council of Constantinople.

<sup>5</sup> Euseb. v. 25.

cally excommunicated by the Council of Antioch (*Canon I.*) Pope Victor was disposed to treat the case as the Church afterwards treated it; and he either menaced, or pronounced excommunication against the Churches of Asia. Other Bishops, however, remonstrated against so harsh a proceeding. And the breach appears to have been either prevented or healed by St. Irenæus, who, though a disciple of Polycarp, and nearly connected with the Eastern Church, had himself adopted the Western usage. He presided as Metropolitan over the Council which was held in Gaul, and expostulated with Victor for "cutting off whole Churches for keeping to their ancient tradition."<sup>6</sup> He recommended, and with success, that such difference of practice should be allowed, as had existed in the time of his master, Polycarp. So that the Church came to no agreement on the subject till the Nicene Council.

Now, there are two conclusions, which may be drawn from this history. First, we see that the Church did not as yet exercise all the authority, which she certainly possessed, for enforcing uniformity. For Polycrates imagined that he should be justified, if he opposed the judgment of all the rest of Christendom. He and his brother Bishops, being sure that they had an Apostle with them, supposed themselves safe, though they stood alone. Since such had been the practice of St. John, who had recorded Our Lord's earnest exhortations to unity, they must have considered that the custom did not interfere with that oneness of faith, which their own teacher had inculcated. But that this was a point which the collective body had a right to decide, and that it had authority to enforce its decision on those who disputed it, we see by the subsequent conduct of the Church, when she settled this question at Nice, and excluded those who stood out against her decree. Secondly, we see what was that power, which aimed at bringing about uniformity in the Church, and where it was deposited. No doubt the circumstance shows that there were other powers in the Church besides the Primacy; it shows the office of Bishop and Metropolitan to have possessed certain inherent rights, which

<sup>6</sup> Eus. v. 24.

were vindicated by those who possessed them. But it shows the action of the Primacy also. For how came Polycrates to call his council together at Victor's desire, but because the latter was taking such steps, as might lead to unity of action? This was recognized afterwards by the Council of Nice, when it expressed its satisfaction that all Churches had agreed to keep Easter henceforth "with the Romans and with us."<sup>7</sup> And it is observable that St. Irenæus, and those who concurred with him, did not blame Victor for interfering, but merely for the harshness with which he interfered. Can there be any doubt, then, that the Church which exerted itself from the first to bring about oneness of action, and interfered for that purpose in different parts of the world, was exercising the very office, which had been bestowed upon that Apostle, who was made the medium of unity to his brethren? And whence should it possess that right of interference, which was not denied even by those to whom the interference itself seemed too rigorous, save because its Bishop was the successor of St. Peter?

2ndly. Somewhat the same inference may be drawn from the celebrated dispute respecting the re-baptism of those who had been baptized by separatists. This practice appears to have been introduced in the West by a Synod of Bishops held under Agrippinus, Bishop of Carthage, about the year 220.<sup>8</sup> The custom of the Eastern Church seems from the first to have differed somewhat from that of the West, as is implied by the 45th Canon of the Apostles: the Eastern<sup>9</sup> Church did not deny that Baptism by those who believed in the Blessed Trinity was valid, though the party who maintained it was in separation, but the Baptism of heretics was either doubted or denied to be valid. Their reason was, that heretics did not really believe in those blessed Persons, in whose name Baptism is ministered. The Eastern custom, however, was neither uniform nor perfectly consistent, and it differed altogether from that which was introduced in the

<sup>7</sup> Socrates, i. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Vid. Döllinger, Hippolytus und Callistus, p. 190. Cyp. Ep. lxxi. 4. ad Quin.

<sup>9</sup> Vid. note 9, on the Oxford Translation of Tertullian de Baptism. xv. and Döllinger, Hippolytus und Callistus, Cap. 3, p. 191.



African Church under Agrippinus. This last proceeded upon the principle, that since the gifts of the Holy Ghost were only bestowed in the Church, no Christian act which was performed out of the Church could be valid. The conclusion subsequently sanctioned by the Council of Arles supposed Baptism to be valid, when performed in the name of the Blessed Trinity, but that its benefits did not come out, till the baptized person became a member of the Church. But the opposite notion, having been countenanced by Tertullian,<sup>10</sup> was zealously defended by St. Cyprian and his friend Firmilian, and was afterwards adopted by the Donatists.

Here again, then, as in respect of the Easter festival, we have a diversity of practice, which interfered for a time with the oneness of the Church's action. In the West, complete agreement was subsequently brought about, when the Donatists finally expired; and the Council in Trullo [*Canon 95*] approximated the custom of the East to the Western rule. But in this case also a single See had previously interfered in different parts of the world, and its right to call others to account was not denied by those who objected to the occasion and manner, in which that right was exercised. Till lately, indeed, it might have been asked, why we have no allusion to the Bishop of Rome, when Agrippinus, and the Bishops of Africa, introduced their new practice. Not, indeed, that the Church's action was at that time so far centralized, that a single Province might not have taken some important steps independently, though with a consciousness that it was bound at the first opportunity, to gain the concurrence of the whole Christian name. But the recent volume of Hippolytus shows that Callistus, at that time Bishop of Rome, was censured by other parties in that city, because in his time second Baptism was first ventured upon.<sup>11</sup> Since the custom is not said to have been introduced by Callistus himself, but "in his time,"<sup>12</sup> and since the subsequent statements of St. Stephen

<sup>10</sup> De Baptis. xv.

<sup>11</sup> Philosophumena, ix. 12. p. 291. and Döllinger, p. 189.

<sup>12</sup> Among his charges against Callistus, Hippolytus affirms, that in his time persons were ordained, who had been married more than once. Of the effect of this relaxation also there is a trace in Tertullian: it referred probably to the case of persons, who had married before, and again after their baptism. Ter-



prove the practice never to have existed at Rome, the words refer probably to the act of Agrippinus. But it was not till the Novatian heresy divided the Church, that the full effect of such a decision became manifest. St. Stephen, therefore, who became Bishop of Rome, A. D. 253, called upon St. Cyprian, and also upon certain Bishops of Asia Minor, to adopt the Roman usage, and like, Victor, either threatened or pronounced excommunication. In this case Dionysius of Alexandria came in as a mediator, as St. Irenæus had done before. "I wrote to him," Dionysius says to St. Stephen's successor, Sixtus II. "making intercession for all these men."<sup>13</sup>

Now, it is remarkable that neither Dionysius, Cyprian, nor Firmilian, assert that St. Stephen had no right to interfere; though by Firmilian<sup>14</sup> especially he is spoken of with great harshness. Their complaint is, that he had interfered improperly, and on a wrong occasion. From St. Augustin's recital of the history, it would seem that no breach of communion actually took place; and this was a virtual concession<sup>15</sup> on the part of those who differed from Stephen. For since they excluded those who had been baptized among separatists from their communion, their position was vitiated, so long as they continued in communion with any part of the Church, which threw open that door which was closed among themselves. But the Bishop of Rome certainly speaks as one who had an especial right to make his voice heard in all parts of the Church: and he seeks to bring about that unity of action which was more or less secured by subsequent Councils.

3rdly. In the case of re-baptism, St. Cyprian did not deny that the Bishop of Rome had a right of interfering, though he objected to the manner in which it was exercised. But in the question of Discipline, in which they were accord-

tullian, in one of his last works (*De Monogamia*, 12) speaks of such cases as existing; whereas in an earlier work he implies them not to have existed. (*De Exhort. Custil.* 7.) *vid. Döllinger*, p. 143.

<sup>13</sup> Euseb. vii. v.

<sup>14</sup> Döllinger suggests that Firmilian's obvious hostility to Rome may have been owing in part to his warm friendship for Origen, who had been condemned by a Roman Council. *Hippol. und Call.* p. 260.

<sup>15</sup> *Vid. Supra.* C. iv. p. 87.

ant, the Bishop of Rome's right of interference is distinctly recognized by the same Father. Here, too, Hippolytus throws light on the relations between Rome and the African Church. Hippolytus's own system was that which was subsequently called Novatianism: and he found great fault with that relaxation of discipline, which took place under Zephyrinus and Callistus, whereby readmission to communion was allowed (on repentance) to those who had fallen into deadly sin after Baptism. This he attributed to ignorance and covetousness, and he maintained that Callistus especially "threw the communion open indiscriminately."<sup>16</sup> What the discipline of the Roman Church was, however, we know from the letter which was written in its name by Novatian<sup>17</sup> himself before his schism: it enforced a rigid rule of penitence, but did not finally refuse communion to any offender. This had not been the case in the preceding century, if we are to believe Tertullian; and he complains, as Hippolytus does, of the relaxation of discipline. "I hear," he says, "that an edict has been propounded, and that a peremptory one: the Pontifex Maximus it seems, that is, the Bishop of Bishops, gives out, I remit the crimes of adultery and fornication to the penitent."<sup>18</sup> The Bishop of Rome is plainly intended, as appears from the reference which is subsequently made to St. Peter;<sup>19</sup> Tertullian, who had at that time become a Montanist, asserts that the Apostle had received no other than a personal commission, and denies that the Church had any authority to re-admit men to communion after deadly sin. Now, the Bishop of Rome at that period was Zephyrinus; and hence the censure which Hippolytus passes upon him, as having entered upon the same course, which was followed afterwards by Callistus. For the edict of Zephyrinus related only to the admission of penitents, who had been guilty of incontinence: murder and idolatry still continued, according to

<sup>16</sup> *Philosophumena*, ix. 12. p. 291.

<sup>17</sup> He says "*lapsorum curam mediocriter temperandam esse credimus.*"—*Cypriani Epis.* xxx. 9. Zephyrinus and Callistus are successfully vindicated by Döllinger, Hippolytus und Callistus, Cap. 3. p. 125.

<sup>18</sup> *De Pudic.* i.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* 21. "There can scarcely be any doubt, that the Roman Bishop alluded to is Zephyrinus."—*Bunsen's Hippolytus*, vol. i. p. 256. Second Edition.

Tertullian,<sup>20</sup> to exclude men from all hope of communion. The charge attributed to Callistus must have included these sins also; and thus the Church's system must have been brought to that state in which it was found by St. Cyprian and Cornelius.

As the edict of Zephyrinus shows that the authority of the Bishop of Rome was admitted in Africa at the beginning of the third century, so we see the same thing still more clearly in that series of disputes which resulted from the growth of Novatianism. It appears even in the tone of those letters which were written by the Roman Presbytery during that vacancy of the See which preceded the election of Cornelius. For they speak of themselves as exercising a trust which embraced other countries. They write to the Church of Carthage, which they imagined to be deserted, "because it is incumbent on us, who seem to be put in the chief place, to guard the flock in the absence of the shepherd:" and as a reason for so doing they refer to the commission given to St. Peter, "Feed My sheep."<sup>21</sup> Again: To Cyprian himself they write in a tone of more than equality: "No wonder, brother Cyprian, that with your modesty you should wish us to be not so much judges, as associates in your designs;"<sup>22</sup> and they assert a right of interfering in other Churches, which was distinct from the general powers of the Episcopal office, since at this time they were without a Bishop. "As to Privatus, you have acted according to your wont in wishing to acquaint us with a question of anxiety. For we all ought to watch for the body of the whole Church, whose members are spread through every various Province."<sup>23</sup> And St. Cyprian was evidently most anxious for their co-operation: "I thought," he writes, "that I ought to stand by your opinion, that our action, which ought in all points to be at one and accordant, might not disagree in anything;" and he postpones his decision respecting the lapsed, "that when God has given us peace, many of us Bishops might meet together to settle

<sup>20</sup> *Idolatram quidem et homicidam semel damnas, mæchum vero de medio excipis?* vid. *De Pudic.* 5. and also, 22.

<sup>21</sup> *Cypr. Ep.* viii. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Epis.* xxx. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Epis.* xxxvi. 4.

everything; our design having been communicated with you also."<sup>24</sup>

The Council which Cyprian contemplated at length took place. "According to previous intention, after the persecution was allayed, when an opportunity of meeting was afforded, we met together, a large number of Bishops."<sup>25</sup> But because the question was one which not only affected the African Province, but the whole Church, it was thought necessary to have the sanction also of a Council at Rome. "If the number of Bishops in Africa shall seem insufficient, we have written in this matter to Rome also, to our colleague Cornelius, who himself has held a Council with a very large number of his brother Bishops, and agreed to the same sentence with ourselves."<sup>26</sup>

It may be said, that this shows no peculiar right in the Roman Church, since, no doubt, St. Cyprian would have been glad of co-operation from any quarter. But it is strictly to the purpose to show, that whereas in every other case affairs were settled in the Province where they arose, there was one Church, and one line of Bishops, which interfered, or was consulted, respecting every matter of internal disagreement, which arose during the first three centuries. And as the Novatian troubles exhibited this in Africa, so still more in Gaul. That Province was not, strictly speaking, a portion of the Roman Patriarchate, for its Metropolitans were consecrated without foreign interference, and did not form part of the ordinary Councils which were summoned at Rome. This fact is assigned by De Marcâ<sup>27</sup> as the test, whether any Diocese was, in the strictest sense, within a Patriarchate; because those Bishops, whom any Patriarch had consecrated, were bound to obey his summons to his Councils. Gaul, then, was not in this sense within the Patriarchate of Rome. The Bishop of Rome, therefore, had no more reason for interfering in the affairs of Gaul, than any of his brethren, unless it was derived from some peculiar relation which he bore to the whole Church. But the Novatian troubles led in Gaul to one of those emergencies which baffled ordinary rules, and, therefore,

<sup>24</sup> Ep. xx. 3, and xxvii. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Id.

<sup>25</sup> Ep. lv. 5, ad Antonian.

<sup>27</sup> De Concord. I. vii. 3.



compelled the Church's rulers to fall back upon the elementary principles of her existence. One of its Metropolitans, Marcian, Bishop of Arles, joined the schismatical party, communicated with those who were in division, and adopted the principles which had been condemned both by a Council in Africa, and by the larger Council at Rome. Here, then, was just such another case as that of Polycrates of Ephesus; a Metropolitan led the opposition, and his brother Metropolitans in Gaul had no authority to interfere with him. In the case of Polycrates, St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote to Victor, and entreated that he would not take any harsh step against those, who were only adhering to their hereditary usages; in the present instance, Faustinus, the successor of Irenæus, wrote with a contrary purpose to Stephen, who sat in the seat of Victor. We know the circumstances from St. Cyprian, who, having himself heard from Faustinus, wrote to St. Stephen to urge his immediate interference. Here was a case, which, unless some central authority existed in the Church, was certainly without remedy. No doubt a Council might have been called, as was afterwards done against Paul of Samosata; but probably there were difficulties in the way, as no such thing is suggested. And Cyprian's letter implies that the thing called for immediate despatch. Now, if either St. Cyprian himself, or Faustinus, the Metropolitan of Lyons, had possessed the requisite authority, why did they not interfere themselves? It has been said, that St. Cyprian was far off, and proposed, therefore, that the remedy should be administered by some one who was near at hand. Why, then, did not Faustinus interfere, who was Metropolitan of the adjoining Province? Instead of this, the various Bishops of his Province write to the Bishop of Rome to communicate what had passed. What was the duty of a Bishop of Rome in such a case, we learn from St. Cyprian. "You ought," he writes to Pope Stephen, "to send the fullest letters to our brother Bishops, who are placed in Gaul, to tell them not any longer to suffer Marcian to insult our college."<sup>28</sup> And again: "You should send letters to the Province, and to the people at Arles, by which Marcian may be deprived, and another be

<sup>28</sup> Epis. lxxviii. 2, ad Steph.



substituted in his place." Finally, as St. Cyprian seems to have doubted whether Stephen was disposed to take decided measures, he puts him in mind of the duty of carrying out the principles laid down by his predecessors, Cornelius and Lucius, "whose memory you ought to honour and to maintain by your dignity and your *authority*." And he adds: "Tell us distinctly who shall have been substituted in place of Marcian at Arles, that we may know to whom to direct our brethren, and to whom to write."<sup>29</sup>

Here, surely, we have a distinct instance, that when those peculiar and extraordinary powers were to be exerted, which were necessary in cases of emergency, men had recourse to the successor of St. Peter. And the mention of this case leads to another way of considering those powers, which were exercised in early times by the Bishops of Rome. We have seen that they had especial reference to the internal divisions of the Church, and that in every case in which a dispute arose respecting its interior arrangements, the representative of St. Peter, and he alone, thought it necessary to interfere. This was the exact function which we should expect to be discharged by one to whom the office of preserving the unity of the whole had been specially committed. The same circumstance would direct his especial attention to those leading Sees, which were each the centre of its own locality, and on which, therefore, the organization of the whole collective body was dependent. And it is precisely in respect to them that the interference of the Bishop of Rome was commonly exerted. In the case last mentioned, it was because Marcian was *Metropolitan* of Arles, that his case called for the interposition of St. Peter's successor. The first instance of any such interference was St. Clement's letter to Corinth, the Metropolitan See of Achaia, with a view of healing its dissensions. Victor addressed himself to Polycrates of Ephesus, the Metropolitan of the Province of Asia. But there were two chief Sees in the Eastern world—Alexandria, which had been founded by St. Mark, the disciple of St. Peter, and Antioch, where he had himself presided before he transferred his seat to Rome. And in the case of both these Sees we

<sup>29</sup> Id. 6.

have early indications of the peculiar right of interference which lay with the Pope. The Presbyters of St. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, complained of his doctrine to St. Dionysius<sup>30</sup> of Rome; the latter expostulated with him, and he explained. The Emperor Aurelian left to the Bishops of Italy and of Rome<sup>31</sup> the decision, whether or not Paul of Samosata should be dispossessed of the See-house at Antioch.

We do injustice to these instances, unless we remember their cumulative force, and consider that all of them happened respecting a single See. It might be asked, what other See there was respecting which it would be possible to make similar statements. And other circumstances might be added, as showing how completely this See formed the middle point of communication to the Church Catholic. The Montanists<sup>32</sup> from Phrygia came to Rome to gain the countenance of its Bishop; Praxeas<sup>33</sup> from Africa attempted the like, and for a while was successful. Meanwhile, the Churches of Gaul felt especial interest in the Montanist movement in Asia Minor, and, therefore, "send an embassy to Eleutherus, the then Bishop of Rome, about the peace of the Churches."<sup>34</sup> About the same time, Soter, Bishop of Rome, sends alms, according to the custom of his Church, to the Churches throughout the empire, and in the words of Eusebius, "affectionately exhorted those who came to Rome, as a father his children."<sup>35</sup> One of the charges made by Hippolytus<sup>36</sup> against Callistus is, that the laxity which had been originally introduced by him, enabled Bishops who had been guilty of deadly sin to escape deposition; and about thirty years afterwards, Basilides, who had been deposed from his bishopric in Spain, goes to Rome<sup>37</sup> to procure his restoration from St. Stephen.

Another circumstance, which requires to be considered, is the peculiar character of the early Roman Bishops. In various parts of the Church we find Bishops of learning and ability, who founded that religious literature which has been bequeathed to us from ancient times. Such were Clement

<sup>30</sup> St. Athan. de Sen. Dion. 13, vol. i. p. 252.

<sup>31</sup> Euseb. vii. 30.

<sup>32</sup> Tertull. adv. Prax. i.

<sup>33</sup> Id.

<sup>34</sup> Eus. v. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Euseb. iv. 23.

<sup>36</sup> Philosophumena, ix. 12. p. 290.

<sup>37</sup> Cyprian. Ep. lxxvii. 5.

and Cyprian in Africa, and Irenæus in Gaul. But no distinguished writer sat in the seat of St. Peter before Pope Leo, A. D. 440. Out of 136 eminent persons who are enumerated by St. Jerome, but four were successors of St. Peter, *i. e.* Clement, Victor, Cornelius, and Damasus, and their letters are all which any of them are recorded to have written. The consequence is, that the government of their important See is almost the only thing which St. Jerome has to record; in the case of other Bishops he mentions their See, and their writings, but he relates how long Victor and Cornelius "ruled" their "Church." Nothing is on record which would imply that any early Bishop of Rome possessed such reach of thought, or powers of combination, as might have laid the basis of a spiritual empire.

It may be said, however, that without any direct contrivance on the part of her Bishops, the authority of the Roman See may have grown up gradually, because their city was the seat of empire, and the centre of intercourse. And this probably will be accepted by many persons, as a sufficient explanation of those various marks of Roman intervention which have been adduced. For it is scarcely necessary to oppose such wild theories,<sup>38</sup> as that the introduction of the Primacy was agreed upon between Anicetus and Polycarp, or that it was devised by the emissaries of Clement, with a view of consolidating the new religion. But it is a more plausible notion, that the temporal greatness of the metropolis gradually gave an ascendancy to its spiritual ruler; and that the Bishops of Rome are not the successors of Peter, but the heirs of the Cæsars. Such an idea naturally finds acceptance with those who suppose that the Church is a mere human institution, and that it owes its organization to worldly policy. And this seems to be the real point on which the question turns. If men suppose that the complicated arrangements of the Hierarchy, which rose up during the first three centuries after Christ, were a mere scheme of human contrivance; if they attribute them to the ambition of priests, and the ignorance of the people, or even to the sagacious combinations of

<sup>38</sup> Vid. Möhler's *Einheit*, 68, note.

worldly men, no doubt they will assign the same origin to that central power in which they culminated.

But if this explanation be adopted, how are we to account for that commission, which Our Lord bestowed upon His Apostles, and which He concentrated in that chief Apostle, whom He allowed to share His own title of the Rock of the Church? Such a theory respecting the Church is fatal to its whole system, as well as to the Primacy; and represents every one of its arrangements to be an encroachment on the liberty of mankind. How, again, can we account for those predictions of Isaiah and of Daniel, which assert the oneness of the ecclesiastical structure, and associate the Fifth Empire with the four by which it had been preceded? And when we look at the Theological system of the Church, and see the gradual growth of its Creed during the same period in which its Hierarchy acquired shape and harmony, how can we admit those doctrines which it attested, if we discard the authorities which it professed to obey? For was it not those very Bishops, whose position it is proposed to assign to worldly contrivance, who fixed that Creed which we ourselves accept? If the Church was guided in its dogmatic statements by God's Spirit, must not the same Spirit have presided over its organization and growth?

This belief is confirmed by comparing the eccentricity of individual minds with the godly wisdom which was displayed by the mass of Christians. It was not through the private deductions of individual reasoners, but through the instinct of the collective body, and the vigilance of its rulers, that God's Spirit guided the Church. Of the great writers who rose up before the Nicene age, the larger number were faulty in some particular or other, and the most distinguished fell under censure for direct heresy. At that time there was no school of philosophy within the Church, and these writers appear to have borrowed from those schools of heathenism, which as yet were unleavened by her influence. This was especially the case with Origen,<sup>39</sup> who was condemned not only by his own Bishop, but by a Roman Council. Tertul-

<sup>39</sup> Ruffini Invect. lib. ii. S. Jerom. vol. iv. 2. p. 430. (Martianay.)



lian, the greatest name among the Latins, was but twelve years a Catholic, and it is a Roman<sup>40</sup> decree of which he likewise makes complaint. Hippolytus,<sup>41</sup> the only early writer who flourished at Rome, was censured, and probably excluded, by its Bishop, for the heresy which was afterwards known as Arianism. To what but that guiding power, by which God's Spirit directed the Church, can we attribute its safe passage through all those dangers, from which so many individuals suffered shipwreck? And if so, it must have been the same presiding care, which fashioned the united body into shape, and gave perpetuity to the succession of the Apostles.

Now, if it was a divine power, and not any worldly wisdom, which directed the Christian community in its doctrinal determinations, it must have been the same principle which moulded its Hierarchy, and which fixed the position of its chief. And that the arrangements thus made were sagacious, is no proof that they were not derived from a superhuman source. It has been shown that Scripture declares the Primacy of St. Peter, and that the Bishop of Rome was affirmed to be his successor, long before the acquisition of that temporal power, which was consequent on the conversion of the Empire. Here are grounds for superiority, which are not superseded, because the worldly position of Rome may afterwards have contributed to the aggrandizement of its Bishop. This circumstance gave increased importance to the Primacy, but does not account for its existence. Such a supposition would be as though the personal recommendations of King Saul were alleged to invalidate the Scriptural record of his selection. When Saul was brought from his hiding-place, "he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards." Here, says the Rationalist, was the real cause of his appointment. Stature and courage are the conditions which give pre-eminence in a barbarous age; as for his search after the asses, and Samuel's intimation that he was to be waited for at the feast, these circumstances were invented afterwards

<sup>40</sup> De Pud. i.

<sup>41</sup> Döllinger, p. 229.



to excuse the meanness of his origin. Tradition associates such fables with the commencement of any great power, "*ut miscendo humana divinis, primordia urbium augustiora faciat.*"

The answer to all such objections is, that it was a divine power which built the Church, as well as gave the Scriptures. The same unfailing wisdom which had chosen the fittest leader for the armies of Israel, selected the most appropriate seat for the chief Apostle. It may be true that nowhere else could his successors exercise their office with so much effect on the general fortunes of the Christian body. No place, then, was so suitable for that Bishop, by whom the united action of the Church was to be especially secured. But this circumstance presents no difficulty to those who suppose that God governs the world, and appoints the destiny of nations. Why should it not be referred to a sacred instinct or a divine intimation, rather than to policy or accident? How came a poor fisherman to plant his standard in the capital of the world, so that its greatness ministered to the extent of his empire? Christian Rome might no doubt be expected to influence the earth, but who could hope to make Rome Christian? The energy of Saul made him the most effective of Apostles, but does it not enhance the miracle which converted the persecutor? If we believe, then, that the Church was a divine system, devised by the wisdom and sustained by the power of God, which owed its organization to the guidance of the Spirit, and its protection to the presence of Christ, we shall see His hand in those arrangements by which it arose to greatness. We shall remember His prediction, that the Church should take the place of those worldly institutions by which it was preceded. We shall understand that the very office of its founders was to build up Jerusalem on the ruins of Babylon. It was where the four empires had ruled before, that Daniel saw the fifth arise. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

It is natural, then, that those who suppose, like Hobbes, that the Christian scheme was one of worldly policy, should imagine that the authority of the Bishops of Rome was deduced merely from the influence of their city. Such, however, was not the belief of Christians in early times; in the worldly state of Rome they saw only the most formidable antagonist of the Gospel, while they recognized in its Bishop the successor of the chief Apostle. Nor will it be the opinion of those who consider the organization of the Church to be divine, as well as its doctrines; and believe that Christ was incarnate once in the flesh, that He might be incarnate perpetually in history. They will accept St. Cyprian's statement, that the See of Rome is "the principal Church," "the root and mother of the Church Catholic,"<sup>42</sup> because it is "the seat of Peter, whence the unity of the Priesthood had its origin."<sup>43</sup> St. Cyprian's statements have been shown to be borne out by Scripture and antiquity—by Scripture, which declares the Primacy of St. Peter—by antiquity, which witnesses that he, who was the Rock of the Church, fixed his seat upon the rock of the Capitol. So that there was a focus, towards which the Metropolitan and Patriarchal systems converged, which gave unity and permanence to their action. Metropolitans and Patriarchs were not of human origin, for they were part of that organization of the Church, of which the Divine Spirit was the cause. Their existence was the act of that same power which spoke in the Scriptures; and they received their form and arrangement, before Scripture was collected into its present shape. But their origin is not so distinctly recorded as that of the Primacy, which ushered in the commission of the Apostles, and gave unity from the first to the office of the Twelve. So that whatever is believed respecting the commission of the other Apostles, must needs be held respecting that of St. Peter; and the succession of all other Bishops is, in fact, to be ascertained by the succession of their chief. "You cannot deny," writes St. Optatus to the Donatists, "that you know that on Peter first was conferred the Episcopal chair in Rome, in which sat the Head of all the Apostles, Peter—that by this chair the unity of all

<sup>42</sup> Epis. xlviii. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Epis. lix. 19.

might be maintained, and that the other Apostles might not assert for himself each his individual chair; but that he might be a schismatic and a sinner, who against this peculiar chair set up another. In this single chair, therefore, which is the first of tokens, sat first Peter, to whom Linus succeeded, to Linus succeeded Clement, to Clement Anacletus—" then follows the list—" to Damasus succeeded Siricius, who is our colleague at this day, with whom the whole world, being joined to us by the-intercourse of circulatory letters, unites with us in the fellowship of one communion."<sup>44</sup>

"Adv. Donat. ii. 2, 3.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME THE CHURCH'S  
INTERPRETATION OF ST. PETER'S PRIMACY.

It has been shown that the early Church exhibited the action of three different powers, each of which had its appointed sphere, and peculiar authority. First, came the Episcopate, the means by which the life of the Church was propagated : the order of Bishops succeeded in their several places to the order of Apostles. They had the care, individually, of the particular flock, which each of them was the medium of uniting to the Church Catholic ; while, as a body, they had the custody of that common faith, of which the Holy Ghost, who vouchsafed to make the collective Church His temple, was the interpreter. The second power was the Hierarchy, without which the Episcopate could not act, because without it the Bishops would have interfered with one another. Its existence, therefore, was implied in the statement, that the Episcopate was one, and like the Episcopate, of which it was a condition, it may be traced to the Holy Apostles. Thirdly, came the Primacy, which gave unity to the whole body, and which was earlier in its institution, and more expressly recognized in Holy Scripture, than either of the others. Not, of course, that any of them were deduced from the written word ; for they were in existence before the books of Scripture were collected into a volume, and in them lay the governing power of the Church, when she consolidated the sacred Canon. But all of them are alluded to in Holy Scripture ; though the two first are not spoken of in that distinct and full manner in which Our Lord spoke of the Primacy.



In the early Church, then, these three powers stood alongside of one another. They present themselves to us as three several principles on which obedience is demanded. Each in its way is arbitrary and irresponsible; so that we are ready to say, at first sight, that they must needs interfere with one another. Such is always the case with different powers, when looked at in the abstract. Take the claims of father, master, and king; has not each office its peculiar rights, and must not the result be the existence of conflicting obligations? In some cases the authority of a father is absolute and without appeal; there are others in which a master, or a king, has a right to decide; yet the royal authority may surely be acknowledged without derogating from the fourth Commandment. The only mode of adjusting such discordant claims is the introduction of laws which assign to each power its sphere and limits, and define the relations which they bear to one another. Thus they cease to be mere principles, on which obedience is demanded, and pass into the shape of institutions.

This may explain why the same events are commonly referred to by those who maintain the Pope's authority in ante-Nicene times, and by those who deny it. Polycrates of Ephesus comes in on the one side, because he called together his Council at the desire of Victor; he is quoted on the other, because he acted contrary to Victor's desire. St. Cyprian is a main authority on both sides. For he thinks it necessary to consult Cornelius, and requests St. Stephen to depose the Metropolitan of Arles; but he opposes St. Stephen when he thinks that the Papal power is exerted in an arbitrary manner; and writes to his brethren in Africa, that none of us is a Bishop of Bishops. The one party, then, is satisfied if it can show that the Bishop of Rome exercised authority in all parts of the Church before the Nicene Council; the other considers its point gained, if it can show that other authorities existed besides the Pope. But though the existence of such other authorities might be used as an argument against the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, it is plainly no argument against his Primacy. It is exactly what we should expect from the action of such various powers as have been shown to



have co-existed in the early Church, before their rights had yet been defined by law, and confirmed by usage.

But admitting that the successor of St. Peter possessed a Primacy, how does this involve the Supremacy of the Pope? The Pope's Supremacy consists of three principal particulars, which either include, or involve, the most important rights which have been claimed by his supporters. 1st. The right of finally deciding ecclesiastical causes. 2ndly. The right of presiding over Councils. 3rdly. The right of interfering in ecclesiastical appointments. Are these rights inherent in the Primacy? For if this could be shown, the Supremacy would appear to be only another name for the Primacy; and the proof which has been given of the early existence of the one, would demonstrate the antiquity of the other.

It is surely no argument against the identity of a power, that it acts under different circumstances, and receives different appellations. Why does the moon revolve round the earth? It is drawn by the principle of attraction. Why does an apple fall to the ground? By reason of its weight. The two processes are different in appearance, and they are described by different names, but one and the same power is present in each. The moon's course depends on two forces, one which draws her towards the earth, the other which would carry her straight forward; on the falling apple the one of these forces acts without opposition. Now, if it could be shown that the Primacy was like the earth's power in the former case, the Supremacy like its power in the latter; that the first was the authority of the successor of St. Peter, when modified by certain other principles, the second when acting without them, it would follow that the two powers, notwithstanding their different names, are really identical. But for this purpose it will be necessary to show, not only that the functions, which constitute the Supremacy, result from that principle which has been called the Primacy, when acting unchecked and alone; but likewise, that the other principles by which it was formerly modified, have been properly withdrawn, and ought not to modify it any longer. Such a change must be shown to have resulted from that process, by which the principles of Church-authority were fixed and defined, with a view

of passing into the shape of institutions. And if this can be shown, it will follow that the Supremacy is the same thing as the Primacy, when acting in a new sphere, and under different circumstances.

Before considering the historical evidence for such an assertion, there are certain principles, which must be laid down, as guiding us in the inquiry.

1st. The Church has been shown to be a living body, endowed by its Divine Founder with full powers of settling such practical questions as might require to be decided. This resulted from the fact, that it is the Body of Christ, and is inhabited by His Spirit. Such is shown to have been the universal belief of Christians during the first ages, and to be borne out by the express words of Holy Writ. It follows, then, that for the settlement of religious questions we must look within, and not without her. All matters of doctrine must be decided by some of those powers which are inherent in her constitution, and not by any extrinsic or foreign interference. She is like a human being, who may fall into slavery, but cannot forego that personal responsibility which attaches to his nature.

Now, it has been shown what were the organs of Church-authority during the ante-Nicene age. The Episcopate, the Hierarchy, and the Primacy divided the field between them: there was no other power; the priesthood and the laity were no doubt consulted, and their opinion was more or less important; but it acted through its influence upon the Church's rulers; the conduct of affairs lay with them. So that whatever can be spoken of as properly a Church-question, must have been capable of determination by one or all of these; no one else can come in to dispute it with them; they may have been unjust to one another, but they have a right to pre-occupancy against the rest of the world. It is as though three brothers had inherited an estate in common, so that each at first has a right in the whole; when it is divided by law, one may be alleged to have an unequal portion, but each has an indisputable claim, as against the rest of the world.

This principle will be found to be important when we come to those particular claims, which make up the Papal Supre-

macy. For example, the right of giving final decision in questions of doctrine. If it were disputed whether this belonged to the Patriarch of Constantinople or the Bishop of Rome, one might claim it as appertaining to the Hierarchy, the other to the Primacy; but it is otherwise, if this power is asserted, either for temporal princes, or for individual Christians. In many Protestant countries, this power devolved at the Reformation on the civil ruler, by whom it is possessed at the present day in England. The advocates for private judgment allege that this authority is inherent in every individual. But according to the Primitive rule, it must belong either to the Episcopate, the Hierarchy, or the Primacy. It is part of the Church's heritage. No other claimant can have a right to possess it. So long, therefore, as the dispute is between such other claimants and the Bishop of Rome, it is clear enough which is demanding his own, and which is appropriating that to which he cannot possibly have pretensions.

2ndly. The internal constitution of the Church, and the relation of her organs towards one another, are questions, respecting which she is herself a competent judge. For since she is guided by the Divine Spirit, how can her determination be erroneous? It has been shown that the Episcopate at large was understood from the first to inherit that promise of direction, which had been given to the College of Apostles. Metropolitans, Patriarchs, and the Primate, are all Bishops, possessing their several places in the Episcopal body. That which has been decided, then, by the whole Episcopate, must express the judgment of the collective body of the Church, and is to be taken as a Divine direction, by those who believe her to be guided by the Spirit. This is the necessary result of the principles laid down in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Chapters.

3rdly. This is still more obviously the case if the rule, which the Church Universal accepts, is of the nature of a doctrinal statement, and professes to be founded upon the words or actions of her Divine Founder. It may be said that the Church, like any other body, may intrust powers to certain officers, and withdraw them at her pleasure. But it is otherwise if she declares certain powers to have been

involved in the original commission given by Our Lord. We thus pass from her function as a body intrusted with power, to her office as an interpreter of doctrine.

4thly. The rise of the Papal power cannot be fairly estimated, if men commence the inquiry with a prepossession against it. There are those who allege property to be a robbery, and law to be an usurpation. Let such a person write a history of the British constitution, and every step in its progress must seem to him to be a further invasion of the rights of mankind. For each successive step encroached still further on the domain of anarchy, and prescribed more definite limits to the possessions and actions of men. Contrast the work of such a writer with the history of the constitution, as it is delineated by Hallam, and every event which was a subject of regret to the one, would be a ground of exultation to the other. The reason is, that they would propose to themselves different standards of excellence: our philosophical historian thinks that the happiness of a country depends upon law, order, harmony, obedience—the other writer would suppose that it was better for men to live in a state of nature, unfettered by the restraints of order and law.

The same thing takes place in regard to Church-authority. If men suppose that it is a good thing for the Christian body to be united into a single community; that it is desirable it should be joined together in a mystic unity, as are the Blessed Persons in the Divine Trinity; that such a state is the perfection of the Body of Christ, and that which Our Lord came upon earth to found; they must of necessity consider, that every step which led towards such a result was desirable. Instead of looking out anxiously for objections to each step, they would readily accept any grounds in its justification. Instead of observing that all the advances of Church-authority may be accounted for by the workings of human ambition, they would trace the guidance of that Divine Spirit, which could make the fierceness of men turn to His praise. Of course the mere fact that power is acquired, does not prove that it is acquired lawfully; and it is requisite to produce evidence that the withdrawal of



those other powers, the removal whereof left so large a portion of Church-authority to the Primacy, was sanctioned by the collective body of the Church. But the judgment which men pass on each individual action, depends in truth on their estimate of the ultimate issue towards which the system tends. Each stage in the road is taken kindly, or the contrary, according as men relish the resting-place towards which it conducts. When St. Leo asserts his claim as the successor of St. Peter, one party feels that he is stating a truth, on which the united action of the whole body depended, and to which the progress of affairs made it essential to give greater prominence than his predecessors had done: the other complains that the ambition of an individual imposed restraints on liberty, which had not before existed. It is the same respecting every action of the earlier Bishops of Rome. But if it was the purpose of Our Lord, that His Church should be an united body; if such union led, as it certainly did, to the maintenance of the orthodox faith, as we at present receive it; if it enabled the Church to surmount the dangers of the middle age, and to leaven modern Christendom with civilization and truth, it is strange that those who are advocates for order and peace in things natural, should prefer anarchy and disorganization in things divine.

5thly. In considering the growth of the post-Nicene Church, we must bear in mind what was the especial danger by which she was threatened. Her previous risk had been from the opposition of Governments; now it was from their patronage. They had in vain attempted to destroy, they now tried to absorb her. No doubt this was the greater danger of the two, and it was a danger from which she has never entirely escaped. But in the novel circumstances in which she found herself, when her ancient foe promised to befriend her, the evil by which she was threatened was not at first discerned. So that the concessions which were made in the first instance to the Emperors, afford an opening for those who allege that religion, like every other public concern, ought to be regulated by Government. Gradually, however, it was perceived how fatal was such an arrangement to that truth of doctrine, which the Church had been



specially constituted to maintain ; how entirely destitute it was of scriptural sanction ; how contrary to the precedents of the ante-Nicene age ; until at length the whole powers of the Church were exerted in opposition to it.

In this contest the main vindicator of the Church's liberty was the same power, which has always been the main defender of Church-authority against the lawlessness of private judgment. To strengthen the Primacy was obviously contrary to the interest of the Emperor, for it afforded the Church a centre of union independent of himself, and at a distance from his capital. The progress of Erastianism, on the other hand, may be measured by the ascent of Constantinople to ecclesiastical power. For its sole claim to authority was, that it was the residence of the successor of Constantine ; whereas the claim of Rome was, that her Bishops were the successors of St. Peter. The one, therefore, grew to greatness on civil, the other on spiritual principles ; the one based her pretensions on the pleasure of the Emperor, the other on the appointment of Christ.

Taking these different principles, then, as our guide, let us go on to consider how far the three several functions, which were said to make up the Supremacy of the Pope, were really inherent in the Primacy ; and whether those other powers of the Episcopate and the Hierarchy, which co-existed with it during the ante-Nicene age, were withdrawn by competent authority.

I. The first and most important feature in the Papal Supremacy is, that the Bishop of Rome is the final judge in all questions of doctrine. For as this gives him an opportunity of interfering in all causes, so does it devolve upon him the chief responsibility in that which is doubtless the Church's most essential trust. Is this office implied in the Primacy ? We have seen that all Bishops were charged with the maintenance of truth throughout the whole Church ; the Primate, then, being a Bishop, must be so also. He must have a right of interfering in all cases, unless restricted by some express law. What we have to show is, that laws were made to restrict others, with a view of bringing out his power ; that such laws were made by competent authority ; and that the

pre-eminence thus ascribed to him, was ascribed to him in consequence of that succession to St. Peter, which was the principle of his Primacy.

In the ante-Nicene Church, the practice of appeals had not assumed the definite form of future ages. The necessity of avoiding too great publicity in time of persecution—the difficulty of holding general meetings—finally, the more ready submission of Christians, rendered such a thing either impossible or needless. But the Edict of Milan was no sooner past, than the necessity of some provision for an appellate jurisdiction was perceived. The Donatists, after having been heard by Melchiades, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 313, and again by the Council of Arles, A.D. 314, obtained a personal hearing, A.D. 316, from Constantine. He heard them unwillingly, and avowed that he had no proper jurisdiction; but as he only confirmed that which had been decided by the Church, no particular evil resulted from the proceeding. But the Arian troubles which followed the Council of Nice, led to further difficulties. The Council of Antioch, A.D. 341, attempted to provide a remedy, by ordering that a Bishop who was condemned by the unanimous decision of the other Bishops of his Province, should not be allowed any further appeal. (*Canon 15.*) But this was an uncertain remedy, because the decision was seldom likely to be unanimous. And if it was not unanimous, the accused Bishop might appeal to a larger Synod, which was to be collected by admitting Bishops from an adjoining Province. (*Canon 12, 14.*) This was provided, with an especial view of avoiding a recurrence to the civil power. (*Canon 12.*) It seems probable, however, as De Marcâ<sup>1</sup> contends, that the order for such rehearing was designed to be given by the Emperor. To order a rehearing in civil cases, was an especial function of the Imperial power; and in the case of St. Cyril<sup>2</sup> of Jerusalem (the first Bishop, according to Socrates, who appealed to a more general Synod, on his deposition by Acacius,) the interference of the Emperor Constantius is especially noticed.

The remedy thus provided was insufficient, because it was either wholly vague and uncertain (there being nothing to

<sup>1</sup> De Marcâ de Concordiâ Sac. et Imp. vii. 2. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, ii. 40.

determine what Bishops should be brought in, except the will of the Metropolitan;) or else it left this important question to the temporal power. Meanwhile, disputes were arising on all sides. Five years after the Synod at Antioch, Euphratas, Bishop of Cologne, was deposed by a large assembly of Bishops from the different Provinces of Gaul, for denying Our Lord's Deity. He had previously been deposed by five Bishops (as appears from the statement of Valerian, Bishop of Auxerre,)<sup>3</sup> and had appealed apparently to a more numerous Synod; but his appeal must have been grounded on custom, and on the general right of interference possessed by the whole body of Bishops, not on any Canon which had been adopted in the West. Neither does it appear on what principle the Bishops who subsequently judged him were collected. Here, then, was such an opening for cabal and dispute, as would have rendered order and government impossible: and at this very time the most distinguished Prelate in the East, St. Athanasius, and with him Marcellus of Ancyra, were in exile, having been deposed under circumstances of great unfairness by the Synods of Tyre and Antioch.

All this was known to the Bishops who met at Sardica, the year after the Council of Cologne had deposed Euphratas, A.D. 347. The Council was designed to be general, but the Oriental Bishops refused to join their brethren. Still it was necessary to provide some remedy for the existing state of things. The fifth Canon of Nice, which provided that meetings of the Bishops of every Province should be held twice a year, and that by their decision everything should be settled, was found to be insufficient. It might have been enough before Arianism had convulsed the Church, and before its alliance with the civil power had introduced a new element into its deliberations; but what was to be done when Bishops and even Patriarchs were deposed and exiled, and when the Emperors took upon them to order a fresh trial at such places and under such circumstances, as their court-favourites suggested? The Council, in the first instance, remonstrated<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Harduin, i. 633.

<sup>4</sup> *Ne quis judicium, qui rempublicam solum curare debent, aut clericos judicet, aut ullâ ratione in posterum sub prætextu ecclesiarum, quippiam contra fratres moliatur.*—Harduin, i. 659.



with the Emperor on the interference of civil judges in ecclesiastical affairs (a thing which had been done in a measure, when the mode of ordering a re-hearing, as had been customary<sup>5</sup> in civil matters, was applied to matters ecclesiastical.) It then proceeded to lay down a new principle of appeal. But it would not have ventured to originate a system, which was wholly unprecedented, nor could it create a power which should have the right to settle questions of doctrine. The constitution of the Church is derived from the appointment of Christ, and her interpretive office gives her the right to modify and apply her inherent resources, but not to create new ones. Her office is like the course of nature, which elicits and develops the principles which God has given, but by which nothing is originated.

So it was, then, here. Hosius, who had presided twenty-two years before at Nice, suggests the addition which it is necessary to make to the arrangements then adopted. "If a Bishop is judged in any cause, and thinks that he has reason for demanding a new trial, let us honour the memory of St. Peter the Apostle—let those who have examined the cause, write to Julius, the Bishop of Rome, and if he thinks that the trial ought to be repeated, let it be repeated, and let him assign judges."<sup>6</sup> In this resolution of the Council of Sardica, as De Marcâ<sup>7</sup> observes, the appellate jurisdiction of the Pope, which exercised so important an influence in the Church, received its first canonical expression. But, then, it is the first mode of settling this difficulty, which was ever suggested in the Church. The Council of Antioch had, indeed, spoken of appeals to a more general Synod, but it had given no rule when the appeal should be allowed, or on what principle the higher court should be constructed. Even if its Canon would have sufficed for the trial of ordinary Bishops, it was inapplicable to the case of Metropolitans and Patriarchs. The Canon of Sardica, then, is the first practical settlement of the question of appeals, which is to be found; it is the arrangement to which the Church had recourse, so soon as the Civil Power interfered in the settlement of doctrine. And it is grounded professedly on a reference to the

<sup>5</sup> De Marcâ, vii. 2. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Harduin, i. 639.

<sup>7</sup> De Marcâ, vii. 3. 6.

authority, which was inherited by the successor of St. Peter. The secular principle, which might have been introduced, is seen in the Emperor's interference to order a new trial. Against this the Council recurs to the Primacy.

Nor must it be forgotten, that if the Pope's right of interference was now, for the first time, embodied in a law, yet it had often before been exhibited as a usage. For what else had been the reference to St. Stephen against Marcian of Arles, or to St. Dionysius against his namesake at Alexandria? And that such was the ancient constitution of the Church, was brought out by that interference of Pope Julius in behalf of St. Athanasius, to which this Canon was designed to give a canonical form. St. Julius "remonstrated by letter with the Eusebian party, for proceeding on their own authority as they pleased; and then, as he says, 'desiring to obtain our concurrence in their decisions, though we never condemned him. Not so have the constitutions of Paul—not so have the traditions of the Fathers directed; this is another form of procedure, a novel practice. . . . For what we have received from the blessed Apostle Peter, that I signify to you; and I should not have written this, as deeming that these things are manifest unto all men, had not these proceedings so disturbed us.'<sup>8</sup> St. Athanasius, by preserving this protest, has given it his sanction. Moreover, it is alluded to by Socrates; and his account of it has the more force, because he happens to be incorrect in the details, and, therefore, did not borrow it from St. Athanasius:—"Julius wrote back," he says, "that they acted against the Canons, because they had not called him to a Council, the Ecclesiastical Canon commanding that the Churches ought not to make Canons beside the will of the Bishop of Rome."<sup>9</sup> And Sozomen: "It was a sacerdotal law, to declare invalid whatever was transacted beside the will of the Bishop of the Romans."<sup>10</sup>

Such was the manner in which the appellate jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome received a legal shape. Its origin was ancient usage, and the honour due to "the memory of St. Peter the Apostle;" its occasion was the necessity of meeting

<sup>8</sup> Athan. Hist. Tracts, Oxf. Tr. p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> Hist. ii. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Hist. iii. 10. Newman on Development, p. 173.



a new case, for which the simpler construction of the ante-Nicene Church had made no provision. The rule was put forward as general, and the evils, which it had been designed to remedy, occurred in the East; but as it was only agreed upon by a Western Synod, it did not acquire general force till it was gradually sanctioned by usage. But because these Sardican Canons, by which the Pope's appellate jurisdiction was defined and explained, were introduced by Hosius, who had presided at Nice, or, perhaps, because they were considered an explanation of the fifth Nicene Canon, they were annexed<sup>11</sup> to the Canons of Nice, and were referred to, both at Rome and elsewhere, as if they had been agreed upon at that Council. Meanwhile, the jurisdiction, which had thus assumed a practical shape, and was capable of being used for the maintenance of order, grew by exercise. Thirty-one years after the Council of Sardica, an Italian Synod solicited the Emperor Gratian to add temporal sanctions to an institution which had been designed to prevent the necessity of calling in a worldly arbiter. But the demand is professedly made, "that the Bishop of Rome may determine about the other priests of the Churches," and "that a priest may not be subjected to the decision of a profane judge."<sup>12</sup> Gratian attends to the request: and his officers in Gaul and Italy are ordered to give effect to the decisions of Pope Damasus; who is declared to have an authority in all appeals, and in all causes which concern Metropolitans.<sup>13</sup>

Nor was this power less real, or less legitimate, because it did not at once include all cases, but was gradually widened, as the exigencies of the Church required. For it was by the Church's own acts, and in proportion as it was found to be for her interest, that the appellate jurisdiction was extended. In St. Augustin's time an appeal was allowed from Africa in the case of Bishops, and in regard to general questions of doctrine: other points were decided by the African Councils at home. Hence was Pope Zosimus opposed by the African

<sup>11</sup> Beveridge supposes that the Canons of several Councils were collected in a volume, which was called "the Canons of Nice," because it began with them. The 14th Canon of Gangra is thus spoken of by Gregory of Tours, ix. 33.—*Beveridge's Pand. Can. notes*, p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> Harduin, i. 840.

<sup>13</sup> Id. i. 843.

Bishops when he attempted to interfere in the case of Apianus, the Priest of Sicca. But St. Augustin, who took part in this opposition, admits the right of Bishops<sup>14</sup> to appeal to the Apostolical Sees out of Africa, of which Rome was the first ; and speaks with warm approval of the decision which had been pronounced by Pope Innocent against the Pelagians. "Diligently and congruously do ye consult the *arcana* of the Apostolical dignity," St. Innocent had replied to the Council of Mileirs (A.D. 417,) "the dignity of him, on whom, besides those things which are without, falls the case of all the Churches ; following the form of the ancient rule, which you know, as well as I, has been preserved always by the whole world."<sup>15</sup> Here the Pope appeals, as it were, to the Rule of Vincentius ; while St. Augustin bears witness that he did not outstep his prerogative ; for referring to this and another letter he says, "He (the Pope) answered us as to all these matters, as it was religious, and becoming in the Bishop of the Apostolic See."<sup>16</sup> And in another place St. Augustin uses words respecting this subject which have passed into a proverb : "Already the decisions of two Councils on this subject (Pelagianism) have been sent to the Apostolical See ; and replies have been returned from it. The cause is ended, would that presently the error might end also."<sup>17</sup>

The power which was thus recognized by St. Augustin was wholly of a spiritual character, for it had grown entirely out of the authority of the Primacy, as interpreted by the usage of the Church. That such was its nature is shown by the testimony borne to it during the same century by the civil power. When a dispute, which touched the question of appeal, took place between St. Leo and St. Hilary, A.D. 445, the following edict was issued by the Emperor Valentinian : "Since, therefore, the merit of St. Peter, who is the chief of the Episcopal coronet, and the dignity of the Roman city, moreover, the authority of a sacred Synod, have confirmed the Primacy of the Apostolic See, that presumption may not endeavour to attempt anything unlawful contrary to the authority of that See ; for then at length the

<sup>14</sup> Epist. xliiii. 7.<sup>15</sup> Inter Epist. St. Aug. clxxxii. 2.<sup>16</sup> Epist. clxxxvi. 2.<sup>17</sup> Sermo. cxxxi. 10.

peace of the Churches *will* everywhere be preserved, if the whole (*universitas*) acknowledge its ruler—these rules having been kept inviolably hitherto, &c.—we decree, by this perpetual command, that no Gallican Bishops, nor those of the other provinces, may attempt to do anything contrary to ancient custom, without the authority of the venerable man, the Pope of the Eternal City; but let them all deem that a law, whatsoever the authority of the Apostolic See hath sanctioned or may sanction.”<sup>18</sup>

Thus was a complete provision made for appeals, so that the Church actually decided all questions of doctrine, without referring them to the civil power. For this purpose it was necessary to have not only the power of making laws, which might, perhaps, be done in Councils, but an executive, by which those laws should be administered. For questions of doctrine come to issue in the case of individuals. Arianism was judged when it was disputed whether Arius or St. Athanasius should be excluded; just as the parties who hold office in her ranks, or share her communion, show what doctrines are allowed by the Church of England. But this appellate jurisdiction did not come into practical use in the East so readily as in the West, because in the former it had to interpenetrate the Patriarchal, as well as the Metropolitan system. By the time of Gregory the Great, however, it was fully admitted, both in East and West; he received appeals from the whole Church; and thus the universality of the principle, and the authority of St. Peter's successor was admitted by that collective body, which has been shown to be an adequate judge on such subjects, because guided by the Holy Ghost.

St. Gregory the Great is often quoted by the opponents of the Papal power, because he objected to the title of “Universal Bishop,” when assumed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster. The title has since been borne, harmlessly enough, by the successors both of one and of the other; neither does it of necessity involve that result which Gregory apprehended—the absorption, namely, of the Episcopate in the Hierarchy. No doubt he was especially on his guard against the encroachments of a See, which was the

<sup>18</sup> Baronius Ann. 445, No. 9. Quoted Allies's See of St. Peter, 92.

natural organ of the civil power, in its dealings with the Church. But nothing can be clearer than that the practice of appealing to the successor of St. Peter, which had existed as a principle in the ante-Nicene Church, and had been embodied in the Canons of Sardica, was at that time admitted by the Patriarch of Constantinople, as well as through the whole East. "Do you not know," St. Gregory writes to Marinian, Bishop of Ravenna, "that the cause of John the Presbyter against our brother and fellow-Bishop, John of Constantinople, has been carried, according to the Canons, to the Apostolical See, and settled by our decision? If, therefore, a cause has been brought under our consideration from that city, where the Prince resides, how much more ought the business between you to receive here its final determination?"<sup>19</sup> Again, when writing to the Bishop of Salona, who had deposed the Archdeacon Honoratus, in opposition to his sentence, he says, "If any one of the four Patriarchs had acted thus, such contumacy could not pass without the gravest scandal."<sup>20</sup> And, again, to the Bishop of Syracuse he writes respecting a third party: "As to his saying he is subject to the Apostolical See; if any fault is found in Bishops, I know not what Bishop is not subject to it. But when no fault requires, we are all equal on the principle of humility."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, this superiority he refers altogether to the Primacy which had devolved upon him as successor of St. Peter; when writing to the Empress Constantina, he calls his cause "the cause of the Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles;" and entreats her, that as her parents "have sought the favour of St. Peter the Apostle, so she would seek and preserve it."<sup>22</sup> It is "for the honour of Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles,"<sup>23</sup> that the title of Universal Bishop had been offered to his predecessors at the Council of Chalcedon; he speaks of St. Peter as "by God's appointment, holding the Primacy of the holy Church;"<sup>24</sup> and, again: "It is evident to all who know the Gospel, that the care of the whole Church was committed by the Lord's

<sup>19</sup> Epist. Lib. vi. 24. Vid. also Lib. vi. 15, 16, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Id. ii. 52.

<sup>21</sup> Id. ix. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Id. v. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Id. v. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Id. i. 25.



voice to the holy Apostle Peter, chief of all the Apostles. For to him is said, 'Peter, lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep.' To him it is said, 'Behold, Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat,' &c. To him is said, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church,' &c. Lo, he has received the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, the power of binding and loosing is given to him, the care of the whole Church and the Primacy is committed to him, and yet he is not called Universal Apostle."<sup>25</sup>

It is clear, then, that the appellate jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome received form and shape, in order to provide the Church with an executive of sufficient vigour of its own, when this important trust was threatened by the worldly power. But it was not the Church's creation; a power which was inherent in the Successor of the chief Apostle, and which had been bestowed by Our Lord Himself, was brought out by the subordination of those other powers, which in the infancy of the Church had existed along with it. The function discharged by the Church was the interpretative one of determining the proportion of these co-existent authorities; and for this function it was fitted by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, whereby the Mystical Body of Christ is inhabited. So that as regards this first and chief exercise of his power, the Supremacy of the Pope is only the Primacy of St. Peter's successor, in an enlarged sphere, and under a different name.

II. The second main particular in the Papal Supremacy is, the right of presiding in Councils. How comes this to belong to the Bishops of Rome? The Emperors summoned the earliest General Councils; though they did not attempt, and certainly had no claim, to preside over them. The civil authorities, indeed, were present, but it was only, as was explained at the Council of Chalcedon, for the purpose of maintaining order, and of adding a civil sanction to that which was done. "We have thought good to be present in the Synod," says the Emperor Marcian, "taking the estimable Constantine as our example, for the

<sup>25</sup> Id. v. 20.



purpose of giving sanction to what is done ; not with a view of exercising authority.”<sup>26</sup> This is all which Constantine really did, even according to his flatterer, Eusebius. And considering that he was at the time a heathen, it would be strange if he had done more. If the Emperors, therefore, called Councils together, it was not because they had a right to decide in matters of faith, but because the Bishops who attended were their subjects, and could not assemble without their consent. Their consent, therefore, was of necessity to be had, just as a scientific assembly in the present day may be said to meet with the sanction of the police. Again: when a Bishop visits, the clergy are called together by his Registrar; but the Visitation is held by himself.

But besides this, the Emperors were no doubt participant in all such assemblies, because they were the natural representatives of the laity. In those days, when individual action was almost unthought of, this circumstance gave them great prominence. If all the lay members of any Church were to demand a decision on any question of doctrine, would not the clergy be compelled to consider it, and, if necessary, to consult respecting a reply? That which might now be done by the combined representation of the laity of any community, was then effected by the demand of the Emperor. But nothing was more fully admitted in the primitive age, than that the interpretation of doctrine was a divine gift, which had been committed to the collective Church, and was to find its expression through her authorized teachers. This, then, was a question, which no layman, and, therefore, not the representative of all the laity, had any claim to decide. So writes the aged Confessor Hosius to Constantius, when that Emperor presumed to interfere in questions of faith: “Leave off, I entreat you, and remember that you are a mortal man. Fear the day of judgment, keep yourself for it pure. Interfere not in ecclesiastical matters, nor give us orders respecting them; but respecting them do you rather learn from us. God has put the kingdom into your hands; to ours has He intrusted the affairs of the Church.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Actio Sexta*, Harduin, ii. 465.

<sup>27</sup> *St. Ath. Hist. Arian. ad. Monac.* xliv. p. 371.

The Emperors, then, called Bishops together because they were their subjects; they were interested in their decisions, because they were Christians themselves. But if it be asked who presided in the ancient Councils, who was at their head, we must look to the Church herself—to some of those three powers, in which we have seen that all ecclesiastical authority resided. Since Councils<sup>28</sup> were merely an expedient for giving utterance to the Church's voice, their constitution could not attain perfection at once; the authority of their president, and the principle of his appointment, would at first be dubious. As time went on, a more fixed system would be introduced; and the presiding authority would be more plainly recognized. Now, all this is found to have occurred in the case of the earliest General Councils. At Nice there was, properly speaking, no President, though the influence of Hosius was predominant, and his name was the first subscribed to its proceedings. The Council of Constantinople was merely an Eastern Synod; and was subsequently received as the Second General Council, when its Creed was accepted by the Western Church. It was presided over, therefore, by the Bishops of the city where it was held, and the first name subscribed is that of Nectarius of Constantinople. But at the Third General Council at Ephesus, the president was the second Patriarch, St. Cyril, who acted professedly as the representative of the Primate, St. Celestine. At the Fourth General Council, the deputies of Pope Leo presided.

Hosius is often spoken of, as though he had presided at Nice; and Gelasius<sup>29</sup> of Cyzicum, writing in the fifth century, says that he did so by delegation from the Bishop of Rome. Probably this is only the explanation, which was given in a later age, of circumstances which subsequent custom had rendered perplexing. But the earlier writers, who speak of Hosius as having taken the lead at Nice, by no means affirm him to have been chosen President; they merely assign to him a pre-eminence, which was due to his influence, eloquence, and character. St. Athanasius speaks of the Arian opponents

<sup>28</sup> Vid. Cap. iv. p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> Harduin, i. p. 375.

of Hosius as saying, "He is wont to lead Synods, and his writings are everywhere attended to. He also put forth the Nicene faith, and everywhere declared the Arians to be heretics."<sup>30</sup> And so says Theodoret: "What Synod did he not lead; and did he not persuade all by his right speaking?" And again: "He had been distinguished in the great Synod of Nice, and had been the first of those who came together at Sardica."<sup>31</sup> These circumstances by no means imply either that he had been chosen to be President by the Bishops, or appointed by the Emperor. In the first case, we should have some mention of the election by the historians of the Council; and Eusebius, whose main object was to exalt Constantine, would not have omitted the second. Considering, indeed, that the great majority of the Bishops present at Nice were Oriental, it can hardly be doubted that they would have given priority to some of the higher Sees in Asia; and Eustatius of Antioch is spoken of in fact by several writers, as the "first of the holy Fathers assembled at Nice."<sup>32</sup> So that it would appear, that no President, properly speaking, was chosen at this Council; but its chiefs, as Tillemont says, were "Hosius for his personal merits, and others for the merits of their persons and their Sees."

At the first General Council, then, no arrangement was made for appointing a President: the Bishop of Rome was absent in consequence of his age; the second Patriarch (of Constantinople) was a party interested; and mere personal considerations gave precedence to those who were qualified to take it. The case was novel, because great Councils had not previously been assembled. Even then, however, the Bishop of Rome was distinguished from all other Prelates, for he alone was represented by his Presbyters; and their names were subscribed next after that of Hosius, by whom the Creed of the Council was recited. This is analogous to that which happened when St. Cyprian corresponded with the Roman Presbytery, during the vacancy which preceded the appointment of Cornelius—the See of Rome, as being the

<sup>30</sup> Hist. Arian. ad Monac. xlii. p. 369.

<sup>31</sup> Eccles. Hist. ii. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Tillemont, vol. vi. p. 638.

seat of the Primate, had a privilege of her own, independently of anything which belonged to the Episcopal office in general. And when the later General Councils were held, and the Church had felt the need of such arrangements as might enable her to settle her affairs on her own principles, the Presidency was conceded without opposition to the Bishop of Rome.

Take, first, the Council of Ephesus, in which Nestorius was condemned, A.D. 431. No doubt the Bishops were called together by the authority of the Emperors; but not only did St. Cyril act as President by especial delegation from Pope Celestine,<sup>33</sup> but the Council refers to his direction as its ground of proceeding. At the commencement of the Second Action, "Arcadius, Bishop and Legate of the Roman Church, said, 'Let your Blessedness order to be read to you the letters of the holy Pope Celestine, Bishop of the Apostolic See, to be named with all reverence; by which your Blessedness may discern what care he has for all the Churches.'"<sup>34</sup> The letter concludes: "We have directed, according to our solicitude, our holy brethren and fellow-priests, men of one mind with us, and well-approved, the Bishops Arcadius and Projectus, and Philip our Presbyter, that they may be present at those things which are done, and carry out that which we have previously appointed. To which we have no doubt your Holiness will yield assent, since what is done appears to be decreed for the security of the whole Church."<sup>35</sup> The measure thus referred to was the condemnation of Nestorius, which had already been pronounced by Celestine, "who had anticipated us," the Council writes to the Emperors, "in passing sentence on him."<sup>36</sup> After referring them to the "authority of the Apostolic See," as having decided against Nestorius, the Fathers say, "Compelled by the Sacred Canons, and the letter of our most holy Father and fellow-minister, Celestine, Bishop of the Roman Church, we have

<sup>33</sup> Vicem nostram Cyrillo deligavimus, &c.—*Harduin*, i. 1318, 1307, 1466. The commission to St. Cyril himself is given, *Hard.* i. 1323, and is referred to by the Egyptian Bishops, 1355, 1475.

<sup>34</sup> Act. Secunda, *Hard.* i. 1466.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.* 1471.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.* 1443, Act. Prima.



with tears come of necessity to this mournful sentence against him.”<sup>37</sup>

The speeches, moreover, of the Pope's Legates abound with the most express assertions of his authority, which the Council accepted without objection, or referred to with positive approbation. “Philip, Presbyter and Legate of the Apostolical See, said, ‘It is doubtful to no one, rather is it known to all ages, that the sacred and most blessed Peter, the prince and head of the Apostles, the pillar of faith, and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom of Heaven from Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, and that the power of loosing and binding sins was given to him; who up to this time and for ever lives and exercises judgment in his successors. Therefore, our sacred and blessed Pope, the Bishop Celestine, his successor in due order, and holding his place, has sent us to this sacred Synod as his representatives.’”<sup>38</sup> And then, after stating that they “follow the form of Celestine, the most holy Pope of the Apostolical See, who has thought good to send us to execute this office,” the Legates proceed to pass sentence. “Projectus, Bishop and Legate of the Roman Church, said . . . ‘I, by the authority delegated to me by the Apostolic See, appearing with my brethren, to execute this sentence, determine that the above-named Nestorius, the enemy of the truth, the corrupter of the faith, as being guilty of the things of which he is accused, shall be removed from his Episcopal honour.’” Whereupon St. Cyril moves, that since the Legates “have executed the things which have been prescribed to them by Celestine,” they ought to set their hands to the sentence; and the whole Council replies: “Since Arcadius and Projectus, the reverend and pious Bishops and Legates, and Philip, Presbyter and Legate of the Apostolic See, have spoken what is suitable, they ought to confirm the acts by their signature.”<sup>39</sup>

All this becomes still more manifest, when we move on about twenty years to the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. Here the Pope's Legates presided solely, and the Council

<sup>37</sup> Id. 1422.

<sup>38</sup> Id. 1478.

<sup>39</sup> Id. 1481.



was more obviously acknowledged to have been summoned at his instance. This appears, not only from Pope Leo's statement to the Council, that it was "assembled by order of the Christian Princes, and with consent of the Apostolic See;"<sup>40</sup> but also from the letter of Valentinian to Theodosius, two years before the Council, when he assigns as the reason for holding it, "that the blessed Bishop of the Roman City, to whom antiquity has given the Primacy of the priesthood over all, may have room and opportunity for judging respecting the faith, and respecting the Priests."<sup>41</sup>

And when we come to the Council itself, the four following things appear distinctly: 1st. The Council yields submission to the Pope in regard to orders, which he had previously given to his Legates. 2ndly. The Council applies to the Pope to confirm its decisions, and that which is not confirmed by him falls to the ground. 3rdly. It rests the deference paid to the Pope on his claim to represent St. Peter. 4thly. It attributes to the Pope a peculiar personal dignity, so that those who assault him are supposed, in an especial manner, to assault the Church. These points come out clearly in different parts of the history of this Council.

1st. At its first meeting, Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who had presided at Ephesus two years before, took his place, without hesitation, as a Bishop. But "Paschasinus, the reverend Bishop and Vicar of the Apostolic See, said, 'We have the order of the blessed and apostolical Bishop of the city of Rome, the head of all the Churches, in which he has thought meet to order that Dioscorus should not sit in the Synod, but if he attempts to do so should be ejected. To this order we must keep.'" The reason is given by the other Legate: "Lucentius, the reverend Bishop who represented the Apostolical See, said, 'He must give an account of his own judgment; for he presumed to judge when he had no right, and ventured to hold a Synod without the authority of the Apostolical See, which has never been

<sup>40</sup> Harduin, ii. 688.

<sup>41</sup> Harduin, ii. 35. Some have imagined, that this letter, because written from Rome, was suggested by Leo. Should this be true, it was still the letter of Valentinian.

done, nor ought to be done.'"<sup>42</sup> Such was the language of the two Bishops who represented the See of Rome, in the largest Council which has ever been held, wherein, however, among 520 Bishops, but two Western were present, besides themselves. And Dioscorus, though possessing the third Patriarchal See, was obliged to submit without opposition, and to abandon his place among the Bishops.

Later on, judgment is given against Dioscorus, and it is still the Pope's Legates who pronounce the sentence, to which all the Bishops present subsequently declare their assent. "Paschasinus, Lucentius, and Boniface, pronounced: 'Leo, most holy Archbishop of the great and elder Rome, by us, and by this present holy Synod, together with the most blessed and glorious Apostle Peter, who is the rock and ground of the Catholic Church, and the foundation of the orthodox faith, hath stripped him of the rank of Bishop, and severed him from all priestly dignity.'"<sup>43</sup> This sentence, it must be remembered, is founded upon the celebrated letter, which Leo had previously addressed to Flavianus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, so that in recognizing it as Leo's decision, the Council sanctioned his claim to pass sentence upon the chiefs of the Eastern Church. The same thing is shown by the assent given to another act of Leo, in that he had "restored Theodoret to his Bishopric."<sup>44</sup> The Council, no doubt, added its further sanction; but it left to the Bishop of Rome that power of acting in the interim, on which the ordinary government of the Church depends. Dioscorus is sentenced on the very ground that, with the aid of the Council over which he presided, he had ventured to pass judgment on the Pope; but Leo is supported in deciding, previously to the meeting of the Council, that Theodoret should be restored, and Dioscorus ejected from its ranks.

2ndly. The Council applied to the Pope to sanction its proceedings, and that which was not sanctioned by him was allowed to drop. The letter which it addressed to Leo, after referring to the large number of Bishops who were present,

<sup>42</sup> Harduin, ii. 67. This indicates what was the belief at that time respecting the Council of Nice.

<sup>43</sup> Harduin, ii. 346.

<sup>44</sup> Id. 74.

adds : "Over whom, however, you presided, as the head does over the members, through those who occupied your place." And the Council then asks him, "to receive and confirm what it had done."<sup>45</sup> "We ask you to honour our decision with your sentence ; and as we have yielded consonancy in things honourable to the head, so let the head fill up that which is fitting for its children."<sup>46</sup> The request referred to the 28th Canon of the Council, which the Pope's Legates had refused to sanction, and which not only assigned to Constantinople Patriarchal power—a thing which it already possessed—but appeared to imply that this power was given to it on the same principle, though in inferior degree, with that possessed by Rome. "To the throne of the elder Rome," says this Canon, "because that city ruled, our fathers fitly gave precedency : and moved by the same consideration, the 150 Bishops gave the like precedency to the sacred throne of new Rome, fitly judging that the city, which has been honoured by the empire and the senate, should enjoy equal precedency with the elder queen Rome, and be magnified like her in ecclesiastical matters, being the second after her."<sup>47</sup>

In recommending the acceptance of this Canon, the Council said that it would be gratifying to the Emperors,<sup>48</sup> to whose presence, of course, the Church of Constantinople owed its whole consequence. Nor did Leo object to allow Constantinople the place of a Patriarchal See, which it had practically possessed through the usage of the Church, and through the decree of the 150 Bishops who formed the Second General Council. The Legate Lucentius,<sup>49</sup> therefore, while objecting to the Canon, pointed out that it was not needed by the Church of Constantinople ; and its Patriarch continued to be recognized, as he had been, by the Roman Church. But the Canon was wholly rejected by Leo, who, in his answer to the Council, confines his assent to its doctrinal determinations.<sup>50</sup> He refers to the decrees of Nice, as incompatible with this new enactment : and no doubt it was entirely opposed to the celebrated Sixth Canon, which, according to the version of it

<sup>45</sup> Id. 657, 658.<sup>46</sup> Id. 659.<sup>47</sup> Id. 614.<sup>48</sup> Id. 659.<sup>49</sup> De Marcâ de Concordia Sac. iii. 3, 5.<sup>50</sup> Harduin, ii. 688.

preserved in the Church of Rome, began, "the Church of Rome always had the Primacy."<sup>51</sup> And whether these words had been part of the original Canon or not, it proceeds on the supposition that the position of the Roman Church was one of ancient standing, and did not depend on mere positive enactment.

The twenty-eighth Canon of Chalcedon, then, was enacted on the understanding that its validity would depend upon Leo's approbation, which it failed to obtain. So we are assured by the Patriarch of Constantinople himself. He wrote to Leo to excuse himself, on the ground that "the whole force and confirmation of what was done was reserved for your Blessedness."<sup>52</sup> Leo replies: "I am thankful, dear brother, that you profess to be displeased at that, which ought never to have pleased you. Your profession, and the attestation of the Emperor, suffice to restore you to my esteem."<sup>53</sup> So that we have here an example of that which the Roman Synod under Damasus affirms respecting the Council of Ariminum; that its decisions fell to the ground mainly because it had not the concurrence of "the Roman Bishop, whose sentence ought, before that of all others, to be sought for."<sup>54</sup> At the same time it must be observed, that when the Council of Chalcedon speaks of giving to Constantinople the like precedence as to Rome, and of the privileges of Rome as conferred "by our fathers," it was merely speaking of those accidents of dignity which attended upon the Primacy, and not of the Primacy itself. For this lay in the succession of St. Peter, which this Council repeatedly recognized in the most distinct manner. This is the next point in the decisions of the Council which we have to observe.

3rdly. The Council of Chalcedon grounded the Pope's authority upon the fact, that he was the representative of the chief Apostle. That St. Peter had fixed his seat at Rome had no doubt contributed to the temporal aggrandizement of his successor; but the spiritual power which the Pope possessed was drawn from his Apostolic inheritance. And this

<sup>51</sup> Id. 638.

<sup>52</sup> Anatolius Leoni: inter Leon. Epist. cv. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Leon. Ep. cvi. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Harduin, i. 773.



the Council repeatedly admitted. In its Synodal letter to Leo himself, it declares him to be "appointed the interpreter to all of the voice of the blessed Peter:"<sup>55</sup> and to the Emperors it declares that Christ "shows forth the truth in wonderful Leo, because He uses him as its asserter, as He did the wise Peter."<sup>56</sup> After the reading of Leo's letter, "Peter," exclaim all the Bishops, "has spoken by Leo."<sup>57</sup> The Metropolitan of Gangra, in Asia Minor, says, "I agree to that which has been decided upon by the *Apostolic See*, and by the holy Fathers."<sup>58</sup> and when Peter, Bishop of Corinth, who had sat with the opponents of Leo, rose up and passed over to the opposite side, "the Orientals, and the reverend Bishops who were with them, exclaimed, *Peter thinks with Peter.*"<sup>59</sup> Nothing can be clearer, then, than that this Council supposed Leo to owe his authority to the inheritance of the Apostles, and not to any mere accident of worldly greatness.

4thly. There is one thing further to be observed respecting the Council of Chalcedon, namely, the personal reverence which it testified towards the successor of St. Peter; as though it was now felt that the unity and independence of the Church was identified with the existence of a Primacy. This is the more remarkable, because it was an assembly of Eastern Bishops by which the feeling was expressed. But when summing up the crimes of Dioscorus, it is his attack upon the Bishop of Rome, as being fatal to the order and oneness of the Church, which forms the climax of their charge. And that, not only in their letter to Leo himself, but also to the Emperors. To the former they say, "And besides all these things, he even extended his madness so as to assault him to whom the care of the vineyard has been committed by Our Saviour, that is to say, Your Holiness; and he meditated an excommunication against you, who have been zealous to unite the body of the Church."<sup>60</sup> To the Emperors they write, that "in addition to all his other crimes, he has uttered his voice (*latravit*) against the Apos-

<sup>55</sup> Harduin, ii. 655.<sup>56</sup> Id. 381.<sup>57</sup> Harduin, ii. 306.<sup>58</sup> Id. p. 350.<sup>59</sup> Id. 130.<sup>60</sup> Id. 656.



tolical See itself, and has attempted to issue letters of excommunication against the most holy and blessed Pope Leo.”<sup>61</sup>

It seems needless to go further in Church History, in proof that the Bishop of Rome was supposed to possess the power of presiding in Councils; for what can be more conclusive than that which has been adduced from the Council of Chalcedon? Though the Bishops were summoned by the Emperors, yet it was with the Pope’s sanction, and at his instance. His authority and sacredness was recognized in the fullest manner; and that because he was the successor of the chief Apostle. And these admissions were made by the most numerous of all ancient Councils, composed almost entirely of Oriental Bishops, and to which, moreover, we are accustomed at the present day to refer, as having finally settled the Catholic Faith. Our standard doctrine on the subject of the Blessed Trinity, and on the Incarnation of Christ, was fixed by this Council. And yet one more Council shall be cited, as having been a sort of sequel and appendage to the Council of Chalcedon, namely, the Sixth General Council, which met to complete the work of its precursor, by censuring the heresy of the Monothelites, which had grown out of that of Eutyches. It was held at Constantinople, A. D. 680, and a letter of Pope Agatho to the Emperor, which was read in the Council, and the Council’s letter to the Pope, are deserving of notice.

To the Emperor, Agatho writes: “With a wounded heart and with tears of mind, I entreat as a suppliant, that you would extend the hand of help to the Apostolical doctrine, which the co-operator of your pious labours, the blessed Peter the Apostle, delivered; not that it should be hidden under a bushel, but that it should be preached, trumpet-tongued, throughout the whole world. For his true confession was revealed to him by his Heavenly Father. Therefore, was Peter pronounced Blessed by the Lord of all, and received the charge of the spiritual sheep of the Church, from the Redeemer Himself, by a triple commendation; and, through the aid of His support, this his Apostolical

<sup>61</sup> Id. 379.

Church, has never diverged from the way of truth into any error whatsoever; the authority whereof, as being that of the prince of all the Apostles, the whole Catholic Church of Christ has accepted, and the Universal Synods its doctrine."<sup>62</sup>

The Council refers to the Pope's letter in the following answer, which it addresses to himself: "The greatest diseases need the greater remedies, as you know, O most Blessed: and, therefore, Christ, our true God, the Virtue, who is truly the Creator and Governor of all things, has given us a wise physician, your divinely-honoured Holiness, who drivest away firmly the pest of heresy with the antidotes of orthodoxy, and givest health and vigour to the members of the Church. We willingly leave, therefore, what is to be done to you, as occupying the first See of the Universal Church, and standing on the firm rock of the faith; having read the letter of a true confession, from your Fatherly Blessedness to our pious king, which we recognize as divinely dictated from the supreme head of the Apostles."<sup>63</sup>

Such was the relation of the ancient Universal Councils to the successor of St. Peter. In later times it has been disputed whether that guidance, which the Holy Ghost bestows upon the Church, finds its final expression in the decisions of the Bishop of Rome, or in those of a General Council. The difference is not so wide, as has sometimes been imagined; for those who claim this power for the Pope, do not claim it for him as an individual, but when exercising that function of Primate, which implies the correlative action of the whole spiritual body; and those, again, who attribute this power to Bishops in Council, do not suppose that it belongs to Bishops separately, but only as making up that spiritual Body of Christ, which implies the co-operation of the chief Bishop, and centre of unity. In one point, however, all parties who admit the existence of an universal Church, coincide—that those things which are agreed upon by its whole body, in conjunction with its chief Bishop, must proceed from the guidance of that directing Spirit, which

<sup>62</sup> Harduin, iii. 1079. [The Latin is followed.]

<sup>63</sup> Harduin, iii. 1437.

was promised to guide it into all truth. And such, then, must be the admission of the authority of St. Peter's successor, which was made by the General Councils of the ancient Church. For those Councils were accepted as a legitimate expression of its mind by the Catholic body throughout the world ; and its faith has ever since been determined by their decisions. Those who accept their conclusions, therefore, in respect to the Church's faith, cannot consistently reject them in respect to the Church's constitution.

This circumstance, then, shows the Papal Supremacy to stand on a good ground ; but the passages adduced, show that it stands after all on the same ground with the Primacy. Its influence is not referred to any commission given to it by the Church, nor to the importance of the city in which it had its residence, but to that inheritance from the chief Apostle, whereby Peter still speaks by the voice of his successor. The Council of Chalcedon rests its deference to Leo on the same ground which was stated by St. Peter Chrysologus, just before it assembled. "Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own See, supplies truth of faith to those who seek it."<sup>64</sup> If the Primacy assumed a more important place than it had done, it was merely because the changing circumstances of the times made it necessary to insist upon this part especially of Our Lord's institutions. The Supremacy, then, is not any new power, but the mode in which an original right was exercised ; a right to which the collective Church assigned its just proportion and importance. "We thank this sacred and venerable Synod," said "Philip, Legate of the Apostolical See," at the Council of Ephesus, "because when the letters of our holy and blessed Pope were read to you, you joined yourselves by your holy acclamations, as holy members to the holy head. For your Blessedness is not ignorant, that the blessed Apostle Peter is the head of the whole faith, yea, and of the Apostles."<sup>65</sup>

III. The third main particular in the Papal Supremacy was said to be the right of interference in all ecclesiastical appointments. This, no doubt, was the last of the three to receive legal form and expression, though it was virtually

<sup>64</sup> Ep. ad Eutich. Bib. Patr. vii. 979.

<sup>65</sup> Harduin, i. 1471.

implied in the two former. For to be the final guardian of the faith, was to have an implied participation in all those appointments, of which the maintenance of the faith was a condition. It was gradually, however, that the centralizing action of the Church led its chief Bishop to interfere in such cases. His interference, when it came, arose out of two circumstances—a fact, and a principle. The fact was, that Rome was the great Missionary centre of the ancient world, to which, therefore, the most distant nations owed their Christianity. Hence it was natural that those whose mission was derived from Rome, should recur to Rome for its perpetuation.

To this must be added the principle, so deeply felt in ancient times, that all Church acts were the acts of a single power, inasmuch as they emanated from a single source, and depended on the organization of a single body. For “all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” The unity, therefore, of the Church, was felt to imply a power of collective action, like the unity of a nation. In the latter all political acts, though intrusted of necessity to individual hands, are yet the acts of the whole body. The ambassadors who represent its interest in foreign parts, speak on behalf of the whole nation. Yet their commission is not bestowed upon them by all who possess authority in the nation; to delegate them is a function of the sovereign power, wherever it may reside; because the sovereign must of necessity act on the nation's behalf in its dealings with foreign potentates. So that though the nation consists of individuals, and though it acts and speaks by their agency; yet no public act can be performed save by the national will, as expressed by its legitimate authorities.

Now, as a nation acts through individuals, so does a Church: the one depends on natural, the other on ecclesiastical agents. Ordination is the process by which persons gain capacity for serving the Church, as the possession of life and reason makes them capable agents for a nation. But in either case there needs an authority to give effect to their agency; this authority must be derived from the power which bears rule either in Church or State, and its perpetual



continuance is necessary to their action. Orders, therefore, like birth, bestow a capability, without which there can be no public agents; but where men are agents of a body, their action needs the perpetual sanction of that body. Hence a distinction has been drawn between the power of *Order*, and the power of *Mission*; powers which must always have been distinct in their nature, though they have not always been discriminated in their operation. Orders, like birth, are bestowed through individuals, but Mission implies the perpetual action of the community, through which it is conferred. If the Church Catholic, therefore, be a single Body, as though, in the words of St. Irenæus, it "inhabited a single house," its Mission, however widely spread, must be an individual power, from which all its numerous ministers, throughout the world, receive their common authority. Though acting in different countries, under different governments, they are still agents of one and the self-same power, which gives competency to their various agency.

Such was certainly the conviction of the Ancient Church; which supposed that all individual ministers derived their authority to act from that collective body, which was inhabited by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, as we have seen, every Bishop was a sort of representative of all his brethren. And if each Bishop is represented by all the rest, that Bishop surely can never be left out of sight, to whom all others are inferior. If Mission be a power which emanates from all the Sees of the Church Catholic, must it not emanate from that See especially, which is allowed to be chief? So that if none can exercise sacerdotal power save with the co-operation of the whole Episcopate, it is plain that such Mission cannot be possessed, save by those who derive it, in the first instance, from the successor of St. Peter.

Such appears to be the natural result of admitting the Church to be a single body, and of supposing that the Primacy, as well as the Episcopate, had come down from the Apostles. And such was the action of this power in the earliest times, in which the Chief Bishop was thought the fittest person to be called in, when it was necessary that some one should act as the representative of his brethren.



This was stated by an Italian Council to the clergy of the East, in relation to the sentence which Pope Felix had passed on Acacius. "When the Priests of the Lord are assembled within Italy for ecclesiastical matters, especially of faith, the custom is, that the successor of the Prelates of the Apostolic See, in the person of all the Bishops of the whole of Italy, according to the care over all the Churches, which belongs to him, should regulate all things, for he is the head of all."<sup>66</sup> In consequence, the Legates of Celestine were spoken of at the Council of Ephesus, as though they were the representatives of the whole West.<sup>67</sup> When St. Stephen, again, was called upon to remove Marcian, the Metropolitan of Arles, every Bishop in the adjoining Province of Lyons was virtually co-operating in the step, though it was the successor of St. Peter alone by whom the act was to be performed. The relation which is thus indicated between the Pope and his brother Bishops, was kept up by those letters which they addressed to one another upon their accession to office. And as time went on, and the Church extended through a wider region, the feeling which was expressed towards the central See became more deferential. For while each was brought into relation to its more immediate neighbours, there was one See alone, towards which all had a relation. So that if the Church's unity was to be kept up; if it was to escape from being absorbed in those various nationalities, which were now rising up in Europe, it was manifest that it was only by forming round this centre that the end could be effected. Hence the tone of the other members of the Hierarchy towards the Successor of St. Peter, became such as was expressed by Epiphanius of Constantinople, when that Church returned to the Catholic communion, from which its abandonment of the decrees of Chalcedon had separated it for thirty-eight years. Pope Hormisdas had written to him, to send "deputies to the Apostolic See," "in compliance with ancient custom."<sup>68</sup> Epiphanius replies, A.D. 520, "I have thought it necessary to put this statement at the head of my letters, that I may show what disposition I have towards your Apos-

<sup>66</sup> Harduin, ii. 856.<sup>67</sup> Harduin, i. 1479.<sup>68</sup> Baronius Anno 520. ix.

tolie See. It is my earnest prayer that I may be united to you, and that I may embrace and cherish as most precious, those divine doctrines, which by the blessed Disciples and Apostles of God have been delivered down especially to your sacred See of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles." And then, after declaring his assent to the decrees of the four General Councils, and to the statements of Leo, (the desertion of which had led Felix III. to excommunicate his predecessor Acacius,) he goes on: "These things I declare to the Churches under me, using every exertion that I may have them united by the bond of charity to your Blessedness, since they ought all to be united and inviolable."<sup>69</sup>

The feeling thus expressed by the first Bishop in the East, that union with the Successor of St. Peter was the appointed means of maintaining the whole Catholic body in unity with itself, was greatly strengthened in Western Christendom by the Missionary exertions of the Roman Church. It had been observed, as early as by Innocent I. that one circumstance, which had led to its pre-eminence, was, that "throughout all Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa, and Sicily, and the islands which lie between them, no one had founded Churches except those whom the venerable Apostle Peter, or his successors, have ordained priests."<sup>70</sup> The same principle is avowed by St. Gregory the Great, who expresses his satisfaction that Dominicus, Bishop of Carthage, had "referred to the Apostolic See," "whence the order of the priesthood in Africa derived its commencement."<sup>71</sup> But it was not till long afterwards, that the system of referring to the See of St. Peter received that settled form which gave stability to the Mediæval Church; and the great agent through which this work was effected was not a Roman Bishop, but our countryman, St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany.

He found the Churches of Gaul, with which it was necessary that he should co-operate, in a state of entire disorganization. "He tells us himself, that it was eighty years since there had been an Archbishop in Gaul; the Bishoprics were seized

<sup>69</sup> Baronius Ann. 520. xxxi. xxxiii.

<sup>70</sup> Harduin, i. 996. Innocentius Decentio.

<sup>71</sup> Epis. Lib. viii. 33.

upon by laymen, or by clerks, who were laymen in every thing but their dress; canonical discipline was totally destroyed. The Church and State in Gaul had sunk into ruin with the fall of the family of Clovis."<sup>72</sup> To remedy this state of confusion St. Boniface brought in the authority of the Primate, as the main-spring for setting in motion the whole machine. "We have determined," he writes, "that every year, in the season of Lent, each Presbyter should give an account of his ministry to his Bishop—that each Bishop should go round his Diocese every year, confirm and teach the people—that the Metropolitans, as their duty is, should examine, according to the Canon, into the conduct and diligence of their Suffragans." "And each Bishop, if he finds anything in his Diocese which he cannot amend, is to state it in Synod before the Archbishop, and the other members, that it may be corrected, just as the Roman Church bound me by an oath at my ordination, that if I saw priests or people to depart from the law of God, and could not correct them, I should always indicate it faithfully to the Apostolic See, and to the Vicar of St. Peter, that it might be amended. For in this way, I suppose, all Bishops ought to make known to the Metropolitan, and he to the Roman Pontiff, whatever evils they find it impossible to correct among their people, that so they may be free from the blood of souls."<sup>73</sup>

Such was the method by which Europe was saved from relapsing into Heathenism in the eighth century, when the great wave of northern irruption threatened to sweep away the religion of the Cross, with the civilization of the empire. The union of the Teutonic nations with the See of St. Peter was the means by which Boniface laboured for their conversion, just as the piety and zeal which is displayed at this day in the Antipodes, strives to bring the Melanesian tribes into union with the See of Canterbury. But the exertions of St. Boniface were aimed at the permanent union of his converts into one body; for whereas the authority of the See of Canterbury over its subject Dioceses depends on no higher principle than the mandate of a Prince, or the decree of a Par-

<sup>72</sup> Thomassin de Beneficiis, ii. 2. 44, 11.

<sup>73</sup> Epist. cv. Bib. Pat. xiii. 114.

liament, that See, which Boniface brought into immediate relation to all the West, had its authority from Our Lord's commission to His chief Apostle. "We have decreed," he says, "in our Synodal assembly, and have confessed our determination, to maintain to the end of our lives the Catholic faith, and unity, and obedience to the Roman Church; that we will be subject to St. Peter and his Vicar; that we will hold a Synod every year; that Metropolitans shall seek their palls from that See; that in all points we desire to follow the precepts of Peter, as the Canons direct, that we may be counted among the sheep which have been committed to him. To this confession we have all agreed, and subscribed, and have addressed it to the body of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles."<sup>74</sup>

It was through the example and influence of this first of English missionaries, and through the glory of his martyrdom, that the system prevailed for which he offered up his life. Thus was cemented that great scheme of Mediæval Christianity, in which the Church practically appeared as one, because its authority was admitted to emanate from that See, which was the acknowledged centre of Christendom. The principle, indeed, was the same, before the different parts were bound together by so powerful an adhesion. For since the Church was always a single body, and mission an individual power, it must needs have its focus in that See, which was the centre of the rest. But this was more felt, now that the wider sphere of her transactions, and the new emergencies of the age, called for additional safeguards. "The Church," writes St. Boniface, "which, like a great ship, sails through the sea of this world, and is assailed by various waves of temptation, ought not to be abandoned, but to be guided."<sup>75</sup> It must not be supposed, therefore, that because from the time of St. Boniface the Popes interfered in a more systematic manner in regard to the appointment of the chief Bishops of Christendom, therefore, they were exceeding their rights, or deviating from ancient principles. For the Church Catholic had called them in through his voice to its assistance; and that right of intervention, which they had always possessed in

<sup>74</sup> Epist. ev. Bib. Pat. xiii. p. 113.

<sup>75</sup> Id. p. 114.



emergencies, became a regular part of the system. It is an acknowledged principle of the English constitution, that the public relations towards foreign powers are to be fixed by the Sovereign ; and accordingly it has been held fitting, that those who receive titles and decorations from foreign Rulers, should not use them without the consent of their native Prince. But it is only during the present year that it has been proposed to introduce an act, by which British subjects might be prohibited from entering into political relations with foreign powers. This would be to explain by statute, that which had always been admitted in principle. And so was it in regard to the action of the Mediaeval Church. Since her power was felt to be a single principle, which lived and acted in every portion of her wide-spread frame, so that the Mission of all her ministers was bestowed upon them through the self-same agency, it must needs have been believed, also, that she had a centre of life, from which all her lines of operation emanated. This centre was discovered, not created, by the exigencies of the times. Our greater knowledge of the moon's orbit has revealed the fact, of which men were formerly ignorant, that the force which draws her is the attraction of the earth. That the Mission of the clergy depends especially on the concurrence of the chief See, and, therefore, that the Successor of St. Peter ought to be satisfied that fit men are appointed to ecclesiastical offices, is in like manner one of those conditions of the Primacy, which circumstances revealed but did not create.

We have now gone through the three great heads, under which the Papal Supremacy may be considered—the final decision respecting doctrine—presidency over Councils—interference in spiritual appointments—and it has been seen that each of them was really involved in the power which was left to his successors by the chief Apostle. For all these powers are built upon that right of interfering in emergencies, which is inherent in the Primacy. They acquired, no doubt, an increased freedom of operation, because other powers were withdrawn, in co-operation with which they had acted. But the withdrawal of those other powers was the necessary result of the Church's altered circumstances,



and was sanctioned by her own approbation. In the simpler state of a community, the public defence may be left to the spontaneous zeal of the people; a more complicated system requires the machinery of a standing army, and the various departments of a national administration. In like manner the Church, which is always warring against the principles of the world, needed a more complex arrangement, when she spread herself right and left through the nations of Christendom. And such a system grew up out of that habit of consulting the chief Bishop on all great occasions, by which unity had always been kept up. St. Jerome, who acted as secretary to Damasus, Bishop of Rome, tells us that his business was "to reply to communications, in which the Pope's advice was sought by Synods both in the East and West."<sup>76</sup> Among the Synodical applications of this sort, one was from the Archbishop of Arragon, who asked for direction in respect to various practical questions. As it did not arrive till after the death of Damasus, it was replied to by his successor Siricius, who concludes, "I have replied sufficiently to the points on which you have referred to the Roman Church, as to the head of your body."<sup>77</sup> So when Nestorius was accused of heresy, St. Cyril acquaints Pope Celestine, because "the ancient custom of the Church requires that such matters should be communicated to your Holiness." "I have not ventured openly to separate myself from his communion," St. Cyril adds, "before I imparted this to your Holiness. Vouchsafe, therefore, to declare what you think on the matter, and whether we ought to communicate with him, or openly to forbid communion with one who thinks and teaches thus. Your mind on this subject should be made clear by letters, both to the holy Bishops of Macedonia and to all in the East."<sup>78</sup>

These references to the Bishop of Rome, as the Successor of St. Peter, became more constant and more orderly when the Primacy had assumed that full form of the Supremacy, which it afterwards acquired. Yet since the authority was the same, the principle after all was identical. For it was

<sup>76</sup> Epist. 91. ad Ageruch. vol. iv. pt. 2, 744.

<sup>77</sup> Harduin, i, 851.

<sup>78</sup> Ad Cæles. Ep. 9, Cyr. Op. vol. v. 2, 36, 39.

the very office which had been assigned to the chief Apostle, when Our Lord associated him to Himself—the Church's true foundation—and put the keys into his hands as leader of his brethren. Thus was he rendered necessary to all, and became the principle of unity to the body. But he exercised a Primacy, not a Supremacy, because the Church, in its infant state, needed to be fostered, rather than governed.

The unknown author of the spurious decretals, coming soon after the time of St. Boniface, seems to have supposed that the polity, which by that time had grown up, must have existed under the self-same form from the time of the Apostles. His forgeries, therefore, were constructed on the supposition, that the machinery which he saw around him had been elaborated by St. Peter himself. Unhappily his statements were admitted in an uncritical age; and the large use which was made of them contributed greatly to the reaction<sup>79</sup> which followed. When the forgery was discovered, the Primacy also was supposed to rest upon those fictions which had antedated the Supremacy. Whereas, it is historically inaccurate to suppose that even the Supremacy was based upon these forgeries, since they themselves grew out of the Supremacy. Its real authority is no more invalidated by such fictions, than the Gospels by their spurious counterfeits. They merely indicate the erroneousness of the impression, that an institution, which is seen in its prime, can never have existed in a state of infancy.<sup>80</sup>

The same ignorance of the real nature of the Supremacy,

<sup>79</sup> It has been supposed, and probably with reason, that the great schism of the preceding century had impaired men's respect for the Papal office, in the time of Henry VIII. Yet it had no necessary connexion with the questions which were then debated, nor does it appear to have been much referred to. That St. Peter's successor occupied a certain office was a question of doctrine: but it was a question of fact who was successor of St. Peter. When Nicodemus sought Our Lord, he was satisfied as a matter of principle, that a person who was possessed of such powers must be a Divine Guide: was this confidence diminished by the circumstance that he had to trust his own senses in seeking the Teacher, and that coming during the darkness of night, he was liable to mistake the Master for one of His Disciples?

<sup>80</sup> Dr. Cole says to Jewell, "The Church of Christ hath his childhood, his manhood, and his hoare hairs; and as that that is meet for a man in one age is unmeet in another, so were many things meet, requisite, and necessary in the Primitive Church, which in our days were like to do more harm than good."

is shown by those who object that it was not conferred upon the Bishop of Rome by any distinct decree of the ancient Church. For what does this circumstance prove, except that it arose out of that Primacy of the chief Apostle, which the Church recognized, but did not create? Statements enough have been adduced, which show that the early Councils supposed the Bishop of Rome to possess the inheritance of St. Peter, and that they dealt with him as the chief Bishop: but no Council thought of bestowing a power, which was inherent in the Successor of the first Apostle. This was stated by the Roman Council under Gelasius, which laid down the general outlines of Church-authority, as they were understood in the period which immediately followed the Council of Chalcedon. After enumerating the Canon of Scripture, it proceeds: "Next to all these Scriptures of the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, on which the Catholic Church, by the grace of God, is founded, this, too, we think should be remarked, that though all the Catholic Churches throughout the world be but one bridal-chamber of Christ, yet the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church has been preferred to the rest by no decrees of a Council, but has obtained the Primacy by the voice in the Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour Himself, saying, 'Thou art Peter,' &c.

"To whom was given also the society of the most blessed Apostle Paul, the vessel of election, who on one and the same day suffering a glorious death with Peter in the city of Rome, under Cæsar Nero, was crowned: and they alike consecrated to Christ the Lord the above-named holy Roman Church, and as such set it above all the cities in the whole world, by their precious and venerable triumph.

"First, therefore, is the Roman Church, the See of Peter the Apostle, 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

"But, second, is the See consecrated at Alexandria, in the name of blessed Peter, by Mark, his disciple and Evangelist, who was sent by Peter the Apostle into Egypt, taught the word of truth, and consummated a glorious martyrdom.

"And, third, is the See held in honour at Antioch, in the name of the same most blessed Apostle Peter, because that

he dwelt there before he came to Rome, and there first the name of the new people of the Christians arose."<sup>81</sup>

The Papal Supremacy, then, is founded upon the Primacy of St. Peter; it is the same power under a different name, and in altered circumstances. And, consequently, the divine institution of the one, is a sufficient authority for the other. As the Episcopate could not have acted without a Hierarchy, nor the Hierarchy held together without a Primacy, so the Primacy could not have continued to exist, unless its power had dilated with the sphere of its operations. These assertions are confirmed by two considerations: 1st. that from the time of the Nicene Council, at all events, the Popes certainly claimed a Supremacy, to which no one else ever pretended, but which was gradually conceded to them by the rest of the Church; 2ndly. that unless such a Supremacy had existed somewhere, the Church could not have effected that which was understood to be its especial function.

It is not necessary in this place to put down in order the passages which show that the Popes who follow St. Sylvester claimed a Supremacy; and that the claim which they made was admitted by other Bishops. Some of the passages have been already quoted in this Chapter; and they are collected in an orderly and striking manner in Dr. Newman's *Essay on Development*, cap. iii. s. 4, p. 173. He begins with Julius, who followed St. Sylvester, A. D. 337. Julius's own pretensions are put forward in his letter to the Bishops of the East: they are sanctioned by St. Athanasius, Socrates, and Sozomen. Then comes Damasus, A. D. 366, the next Pope but one, whose assertions are borne out by the statements of his contemporaries, St. Jerome, St. Basil, and the Deacon Hilary. "'I speak,' says St. Jerome to Damasus, 'with the successor of the fisherman and the disciple of the Cross. I, following no one as my chief but Christ, am associated in communion with thy Blessedness, that is, with the See of Peter. I know that on that Rock the Church is built.

<sup>81</sup> Harduin, ii. 938. In this, and some other places, I have availed myself of the translations given by Mr. Allies (See of St. Peter,) after comparing them with the original. The same use has been made at times of Dr. Newman's *Essay on Development*.



Whosoever shall eat the Lamb outside this House is profane ; if a man be not in the ark of Noe, he shall perish, when the flood comes in its power.’<sup>82</sup> St. Basil entreats St. Damasus to send persons to arbitrate between the Churches of Asia Minor, or at least to make a report on the authors of their troubles, and the party with whom the Pope should hold communion. ‘We are in nowise asking anything new,’ he proceeds, ‘but what was customary with blessed and religious men of former times, and especially with yourself. For we know, by tradition of our fathers, of whom we have inquired, and from the information of writings still preserved among us, that Dionysius, that most blessed Bishop, while he was eminent among you for orthodoxy and other virtues, sent letters of visitation to our Church of Cæsarea, and of consolation to our fathers, with ransomers of our brethren from captivity.’<sup>83</sup> In like manner Ambrosiaster,<sup>84</sup> a Pelagian in his doctrine, which is not to the purpose, speaks of the ‘Church being God’s house, whose ruler at this time is Damasus.’”<sup>85</sup>

Damasus was succeeded by Siricius, A. D. 384, and he by St. Innocent : both of them asserted their right to rule, and their assertions were responded to by the acknowledgments, respectively, of St. Optatus and St. Augustin. Somewhat later came St. Celestine, A. D. 422, who wrote to the Illyrian Bishops : “An especial anxiety about all persons devolves on us, on whom, in the Holy Apostle Peter, Christ conferred the necessity of making all persons our concern, when He gave him the keys of opening and shutting.”<sup>86</sup> His assertion tallies with the statements of his contemporary, St. Prosper, who calls Rome “the seat of Peter, which being made to the world the head of pastoral honour, possesses by religion what it does not possess by arms ;”<sup>87</sup>—and of Vincent of Lerins, who calls the Pope, or, perhaps, the Roman See, “the head of the whole world.”<sup>88</sup>

And this brings us to St. Leo (A. D. 440,) whose own asser-

<sup>82</sup> St. Jerome, Ep. 14, vol. iv. 2. 19.

<sup>83</sup> Epist. lxx.

<sup>84</sup> In I Tim. iii. 14, 15.

<sup>85</sup> Ess. on Devel. p. 174.

<sup>86</sup> Coustant, p. 1063.

<sup>87</sup> De Ingrat. 2.

<sup>88</sup> Common. 30.



tions are as distinct, as was the response made to them by the Council of Chalcedon. For "as St. Athanasius and the Eusebians, by their contemporary testimonies, confirm St. Julius; and St. Jerome, St. Basil; and Ambrosiaster, St. Damasus; and St. Optatus, St. Siricius; and St. Augustin, St. Innocent; and St. Prosper and Vincent, St. Celestine; so do St. Peter Chrysologus, and the Council of Chalcedon, confirm St. Leo."<sup>89</sup> Their testimony has been exhibited in the earlier part of this chapter; St. Leo's assertions, in a letter to the Bishops of the Province of Vienne, show his own claim, and the principle on which it was rested. "The Lord hath willed, that the mystery of this gift (of announcing the Gospel,) should belong to the office of all the Apostles, on the condition of its being chiefly seated in the most blessed Peter, first of all the Apostles: and from him, as it were from the Head, it is His pleasure that His gifts should flow into the whole Body, that whoever dares to recede from the Rock of Peter, may know that he has no part in the divine mystery. For him hath He assumed into the participation of His indivisible unity, and willed that he should be named what Himself is, saying, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church;' that the rearing of the eternal temple by the wonderful gift of the grace of God might consist in the solidity of Peter, strengthening with this firmness His Church, that neither the rashness of men might attempt it, nor the gates of hell prevail against it."<sup>90</sup>

It is needless to go further than St. Leo, for everything which can be claimed for the Primate is virtually included in such assertions as these; I turn, therefore, to the other assertion, that the unity of the Church could not have been maintained, unless a central power had existed somewhere; while it is notorious that no centre has ever been thought of, save the successor of St. Peter. In making this assertion I do not build upon *a priori* grounds, or argue that the author of revelation must needs have provided for its permanent explanation. Those who are convinced that God is the God

<sup>89</sup> Ess. on Devel. p. 176.

<sup>90</sup> S. Leo, Ep. x. 1.

of order, and conceive that the purpose for which revelation was given cannot be carried out without some such provision, will no doubt feel the force of such a mode of reasoning. But such analogical reasoning is far less effective in the establishment of truth, than when it can be used for the confutation of error. And the present argument does not rest upon any assumption of that which the Supreme Governor might be expected to do, but upon that which He predicted under the Ancient Economy, and revealed under the New. The prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, contemplate the Church as a kingdom, which should take its place among the institutions of the earth. So was it described in the Parables of Our Lord; this is the conclusion to be drawn from St. Paul's arguments, and St. John's vision. Such was it believed to be by the first followers of the Apostles. They supposed that it was truly Christ's Body, inhabited by the Holy Ghost, and endowed with that gift of life, which ramified through all its members. Hence flowed its functions of guidance, and its form of government. All were believed to have their root in that Incarnation of the Son of God, which was once for all vouchsafed in the flesh, that it might be perpetuated for ever in history.

Now, such functions could not be discharged by the Body of Christ, unless it possessed order, shape, and government. Without these there could be no rule exercised in the earth, and no administration of discipline. They imply that the Body of Christ must have an earthly head, as well as earthly members. And exactly in proportion as the circumference grew more wide, must the force lodged in the centre be augmented. St. Peter's voice was heard readily among the Twelve, but the Pope must speak loud to be heard by all nations. But if all Bishops derive their commission from the Apostles, and the power which they received has been handed on to their successors, so assuredly must it be with the Primacy also. If such a bond was needed for the union of those Twelve Brethren, how much more, now that their descendants have multiplied among all nations! So that the Pope's Supremacy stands on two assumptions; one of

them borne out by plain words in Scripture, the other attested by the universal belief of the early Christians—that St. Peter was Primate of the Twelve, and that the office of the Twelve was not to last merely for a year, or a life, but throughout all generations.

## CHAPTER XII.

HOW FAR THE POPULAR PRINCIPLE OF SUBSCRIPTION TO  
THE ENGLISH FORMULARIES IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE  
RULE OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

IN the preceding part of this work it has been shown what was that belief respecting Church-authority, which prevailed in this country till towards the middle of the sixteenth century. It was the same which had been entertained in the Empire while our forefathers were still inhabitants of the German forest, and which they derived from that great Pope, to whom they owed their faith and their civilization. Let us now go on to consider, how far it is compatible with those engagements which are contracted by all Englishmen who graduate at the Universities, or become teachers in the National Church; and which virtually, therefore, determine the faith of all Churchmen. For though the laity are not required to do more than to abstain from impeaching any part of the "regal supremacy" "in Causes Ecclesiastical"<sup>1</sup> (*Canon 2*), or from affirming that "the Book of Common Prayer" "containeth anything in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures" (*Canon 4*), or that "any of the Nine-and-thirty Articles" are "erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto" (*Canon 5*;) yet since all are called upon to profess belief "in the Holy Catholic Church," and since "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith," it follows, that all are bound to receive that which the Church teaches by her authorized ministers, and, therefore, that all

<sup>1</sup> By the 27th Canon the clergy are forbidden to administer the Holy Communion "to any that have spoken against . . . his Majesty's Sovereign authority in Causes Ecclesiastical."

are interested in the Formularies which determine their belief.

The Clergy were required to subscribe to the Queen's Supremacy, by 1 Eliz. 1. A.D. 1558; and to the doctrinal Articles, by 13 Eliz. 12. A.D. 1570; they have since been required by the 36th Canon, A.D. 1603, to declare their assent not only to all the Articles and to the Supremacy, but likewise to the Book of Common Prayer; and, finally, by the 13 and 14 Car. 2. c. 4. A.D. 1662, those who are admitted to benefices, are required to give a still more particular sanction to the last, by publicly declaring their "unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things therein contained and prescribed." On what principle is this done, and how are men justified in doing it? I will first state what appears to be the common principle on which subscription is made, and then, in a subsequent chapter, consider what seems to have been the Church's intention in requiring it.

There can be little doubt that Subscription is grounded in most instances on the mere principle of private judgment. Various works have been written in explanation of the Articles, most of which undertake to demonstrate them from Holy Scripture, and appeal to the reason of their readers as a competent, and indeed the only judge, by which such questions can be determined. That such is the case is what the majority of Englishmen would either fully admit, or freely affirm. Yet such a practice is entirely at variance with that which was shown in the second Chapter to be a fundamental law of the Gospel, that the judgment in matters of faith does not rest with individuals, but with the Body of Christ. It implies an entire forgetfulness of Our Lord's own statement, that His words could only be comprehended by a divine guidance; for divine guidance, as was shown in the third Chapter, is derived from God the Holy Ghost, by whom the Body of Christ is inhabited. So that the principle of Subscription commonly adopted, implies a forgetfulness that God is wiser than man, and that the system of grace has superseded the system of nature.

But besides this capital error, the conduct referred to is beset by two other difficulties. First, it takes for granted



the authority of Holy Scripture. But, as St. Augustin said long ago, what proof has any one of the authority of Holy Scripture, unless he recognizes the judgment of the Church? Almighty God might have given us a revelation, which was authenticated either by some public national act, or by the testimony of certain well-known individuals. The first was the case with the Law of Moses; the second, perhaps, with some books of the New Testament. But it was shown in the second Chapter that such was not the case with the New Testament at large. The volume, looked at as a whole, and many important portions of it, depend for their authority upon the judgment of the post-Apostolic Church. We receive it as inspired, because it was adjudged to be so by the Church. Those, therefore, who do not admit the rule of Church-authority, and who appeal instead of it to their own individual reason, are guilty of a happy inconsistency when they recognize the authority of Holy Writ. For their principles should lead them to admit nothing, which is beyond the sphere of their own knowledge. And hence some, like the Rationalist Semler,<sup>2</sup> consider that the only test of the inspiration of Scripture is the individual consciousness of its readers; while the majority are contented to assume Scripture to be an authority, without considering how its claims are authenticated.

Another great difficulty in Subscription to the Formularies of the Church of England, arises from the extent and intricacy of the statements to be subscribed. First, they require considerable historical knowledge: how can any one, for instance, be justified in affirming, on his private judgment, that "the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred," unless he has made diligent inquiry into the truth of the accusation? It is not consistent with the ninth Commandment to bring charges even against individuals without examination; how much less against large bodies of our fellow-Christians! It can hardly be thought, as Dr. Hey<sup>3</sup> seems to suppose, that we may throw out imputations of this

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Tholuck's *Vermischte Schriften*, ii. 56, as quoted *Doctrine of Incarnation*. Cap. xiv. Note 33.

<sup>3</sup> In what these Churches "have erred, seems but of little moment," &c.—*Hey's Lectures*, iv. Art. 19.

sort, on the general expectation that there may be something to substantiate them.

A more serious difficulty still is, the necessary intricacy of many of these statements. Here are a vast number of propositions, touching upon the most deep and mysterious questions of human knowledge, which every one who takes Orders is required to subscribe, and which he is excommunicated if he declares to be "in any part erroneous." The diversity of human judgments makes it strange that so many persons should exactly agree respecting so many propositions: and especially is it singular, that those who feel justified in affirming, in consequence of the general infirmity of human nature, that the chief Churches of Christendom have erred, should find no difficulty in asserting the truth of everything which is propounded by the Church of England.

The difficulty becomes greater when it is considered, that the clergy are divided into various parties, who are widely opposed to one another in almost every particular. It may be allowable, perhaps, to employ the phraseology of a recent Reviewer, who has distributed them into three classes, which he designates as High, Low, and Broad. The last may be expected to be comparatively inattentive to matters of doctrine; regarding the Church chiefly as a social institution, designed merely to raise the standard of morals and ameliorate the manners of men. But the *High* and *Low* agree in one point, if in nothing else, that to contend for the truth is the first duty of Christians. They differ, however, respecting almost every point of doctrine. One believes the Church to be the Body of Christ, inhabited by His Spirit; the other supposes it to be little more than a religious Club. One believes in Baptismal Regeneration, and in the Real Presence; the other speaks of the Sacraments as if they were only acted Sermons. One affirms Christ to speak by the voice of His Priests, and that deadly sin requires absolution; the other affirms, that the Priest's words are no more effective than those of his parish clerk. Yet both parties, as well as the *Broad* who lie between them, subscribe to the same Formularies, which they interpret avowedly in contradictory senses, and from which they deduce the most opposite results.

If all this does not arise from the laxity of those who subscribe, but from the ingenuity of those who devised our Formularies, they must certainly have been the greatest masters of equivocal expression whom the world has known.

But, in truth, they never supposed that subscription would be made on the principles which at present are prevalent. They give no countenance to the necessary dishonesty which must be engendered, if such Formularies are subscribed on private judgment; for they designed them, like Scripture itself, to be accepted on authority. All Christians agree in admitting the Bible to be true, although they differ in the meaning which they assign to its individual statements. If Scripture appears to assert anything, which we have reason to suppose false, we never imagine Scripture itself to be inaccurate. For believing it to come from an inspired source, we accept it, not because we have verified its words, but because we admit its authority. We take for granted that an explanation exists, though it may not at present be apparent. This is the only principle, on which Subscription can safely be made to any extended body of Formularies. Those who recognize the Church's authority, are justified in declaring their assent to everything which she teaches; for they know that she will teach nothing to which they are not bound to assent. And such was the claim, which our Formularies were supposed to possess by those who promulgated them. The Church of England, as shall be shown in the next Chapter, was believed to be the Church Catholic sojourning in this land, and the decrees, therefore, which she set forth here in England, were supposed to emanate from the same source, and to be entitled to the same deference, with any other declaration of her unerring authority. The first Prayer Book of Edward VIth. was declared by Parliament (A. D. 1548,) "to be drawn up by the aid of the Holy Ghost." And such has been the principle on which this and the other authorized Formularies have been subscribed by those who recognize the Church's authority. So that their Subscription may be vindicated from the suspicions which attach to those, whose private judgment is found to harmonize with their worldly interests.

But even their case has its difficulties. Its principle is, that some better judge is needed than the reason of individuals, because the things of God can only be comprehended by the Spirit of God. It is clear that each individual cannot pretend to be guided infallibly by God's Spirit; for the best men differ among themselves; neither was such a claim advanced in ancient times for any but the Apostles. This better judge has always been understood, therefore, to be the Church; and the Church is represented to each individual by those particular officers, to whom his position gives him a relation. Here, in England, therefore, the Archbishops and Bishops of the Provinces of Canterbury and York claim our obedience; we subscribe the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles at their instance; they stand to us in the place of that Church Catholic, which inherits the promises; the writings which they put into our hands are their instruments, and are endued with a living power, because they are the voice of that sacred community, which is inhabited by the Holy Ghost. In setting forth these books, the Church Catholic proceeds, of course, as in every other instance, on a reference to the past; she employs both Scripture and Antiquity as that deposit of truth, which was set forth once for all on inspired authority. But to apply their teaching to fresh emergencies is her office; she does not argue but explain; she declares how every new case is to be decided according to ancient principles. So that the principle on which the Formularies of the Church of England are subscribed is, that she is herself a living, acting authority, which speaks through those whom she has put in trust, and gives utterance, as the Body of Christ, to that which the Holy Ghost teaches.

It is this view of the character of the Church of England which is expressed, when we are told in the Articles, that "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith." The words would be nugatory, if they did not refer to some body with which the parties who subscribe were acquainted; and their sense is fixed by the accompanying statement, that the same body "hath power to decree rites and ceremonies." For this power is stated by the Thirty-fourth Article to belong to



“every particular or National Church.” But this view of the Church of England, as claiming authority over the conscience, was dissipated by the Gorham Case.<sup>4</sup> It then became manifest, that neither the rulers of the English Church, nor the Church herself in her corporate capacity, exert any such power, or claim to act on any such principles. No part of

<sup>4</sup> Many persons suppose that the Gorham Case was not an ecclesiastical decision, and does not affect the Church of England. But it is plainly a Spiritual act, when a Bishop pronounces upon the doctrinal soundness of any one who is intrusted with the cure of souls. Now, how does such a process change its nature, when it is carried by appeal from the Bishop to the Archbishop, or from the Archbishop to the Crown? If it is a religious question in its lower stage, why not in its higher? And the Crown’s interference in such cases was meant to be Spiritual; for it was substituted for the power of the Pope by 25 Henry VIII. xix. s. 6, and it was justified on the ground, that the King was “a spiritual man.” (*Vid. infra*, p. 225.) It is true that in the previous year the Crown had admitted, that any question of “spiritual learning” ought to be referred to “the spirituality.” (24 Henry VIII. 12.) And for many years the Crown acted on this principle, and appointed Ecclesiastics as its instruments in exercising its spiritual power. But the Crown was never bound, and has long ceased to do so. And the Bishops, who were thus appointed, never professed to act by their own inherent power, but only as *delegates* of the “supreme” ruler. As the Gorham Case, however, was the first important decision on doctrine which the Sovereign has ever given in person, it was possible that the Church of England might refuse to submit to such dictation. But, as the writer of these pages stated in 1850, “if her Courts recognize this sentence as binding, and the Church sits still, and by no legislative act declares her disapprobation, how can she be understood to dissent?” (*Charge on the Gorham Case*, p. 10.) Now, the Church’s Courts have publicly accepted the decision, and her Prelates have given *mission* to the Clerk who was charged with heresy. And by this time it must be obvious, both that the appellate jurisdiction of the Crown is not likely to be taken away, and that the Church of England is prepared to submit to it. Whether this power be exercised by the King in Chancery or the King in Council, is of little moment, since it is plainly that ultimate jurisdiction which belonged formerly to the Patriarch, and which must be exercised by some one, if questions of doctrine are to receive any decision. For the Gorham Case was not a temporal question which incidentally involved spiritual rights (like those which occasionally arise in the Courts of Westminster;) on the contrary, it was a spiritual question, by which rights of property were incidentally involved. The point in dispute was the right to the *Cure of Souls*; and it was purely accidental that certain worldly emoluments happened to belong to the office which was contested. And, therefore, the trial was in Courts of Spiritual cognizance, and turned wholly upon an examination of doctrine. So that the Gorham sentence “has force,” as was said four years ago; “it must have force, till it is rescinded by some act equally formal and authoritative.” (*Charge*, &c. p. 18.) It either proves that to leave Baptism an open question is *right*, or that the Church, which does so, is in the *wrong*; it binds men’s consciences either to allow the lawfulness of the step, or to disallow the authority of the Body by which it has been sanctioned.



her Formularies, probably, are drawn up with greater precision than those which relate to Baptism; for as this subject did not happen to be disputed in the 16th century, the ancient precedents were followed with little deviation. If the Church, therefore, does not enforce agreement on this subject, it can scarcely be supposed that she does on any other. But the Gorham Case decided, that those who deny baptismal grace have the same right to act as the Church's representatives as those who affirm it: so that the Church of England denies in one parish, by the mouth of her minister, that which she affirms in another. And this decision resulted from the further fact, that the civil power had taken possession, with the Church's assent, of her spiritual organs; her courts professed themselves bound to affirm or deny according as the temporal Sovereignty ordered them; and cannot claim, therefore, to be the expression of that mind of the Spirit, which utters its voice through the Body Mystical of the Son of God. And when her chief Spiritual Officer was publicly consulted on the subject by a clergyman, who wished to learn on what principle the clergy were called upon to subscribe, he avowed that he possessed no more authority than any other individual, but that any one who could read, and could procure a copy of the New Testament, was as much entitled to be a judge of doctrine as himself. Four years have since passed, during two of which the Convocation of Canterbury has had opportunity of discussion; yet neither the principles avowed by the Archbishop, nor those which were acted upon by his Court, have been repudiated by the clergy collectively, nor by the Bishops of either Province. The justice of the decision has been called in question, indeed, by many individuals; but that such questions are to be decided by the civil power, and not by the Church, seems to be acquiesced in on all hands as inevitable.

It is plain, then, that this principle of Subscription falls to the ground also. For no one can imagine that the doctrinal decisions of the civil power bind the conscience, or that the words of the Queen of England have any claim to express the mind of the Catholic Church. Perhaps, it may be urged, that the Formularies of the Church of England remain unal-

tered ; and that it is to these, and not to the voice of her existing leaders, that we should pay deference. Why should not we be satisfied, it is said, so long as we are sure that the Book of Common Prayer expresses those truths, which are taught in Scripture and were sanctioned by Antiquity ? But this would be to accept our Formularies, because they have been examined and approved by our individual reason, not because they possess authority ; and, therefore, to abandon the idea that we have any better criterion than private judgment. For these books do but represent the mind of those by whom they are put forth ; they express at every moment the judgment of the society which sanctions them : now, why should we admit the authority of that past generation of our spiritual rulers, by whom they were promulged, if we make no account of the authority of that present generation, by whom they are interpreted ? The books may be good and true, and may approve themselves to our private reason ; but we cannot subscribe them on the ground that they are the voice of the Church Catholic sojourning here in England, and proceed from that higher Wisdom, which we are bound to respect.

It remains, therefore, that our Formularies should be accepted, because their truth approves itself to our own minds, upon reference to Scripture and Antiquity. But is not this precisely that principle of private judgment, which these very authorities have been shown to repudiate ? For what is Antiquity but a series of books, which differ from Scripture only in possessing greater extent, and inferior authority ? Antiquity may increase the extent of our *rule*, but it cannot act as a *judge* of doctrine. It cannot supply the place of a living Body, or discharge those functions, therefore, which the ancient Fathers ascribe to the Body of Christ. In all these respects, indeed, its wide extent involves peculiar difficulties. Scripture is a fountain of instruction which it is possible to approach, though impossible to fathom ; but Antiquity is inaccessible to the majority of men. So that they can do nothing but trust to the assertions of some self-chosen teacher, whose learning or piety commands their confidence. And this is the very principle of Sectarianism. The Church

Catholic is the Body of Christ, in which those who rule are empowered to speak on behalf of a Divine institution, however feeble their individual powers. The Church of England is the Church of a great nation, and its rulers, therefore, have that respectability which results from worldly acceptance, and legal recognition. But those who lean on the judgment of individuals, can neither refer to that Divine authority which speaks through the one, nor to that human consent which gives weight to the other. They are surrendering themselves to that private attachment to some individual leader, which is eminently un-Catholic in its tendency, and for which St. Augustin reprehends the Donatists. He contrasts it with that love for the unity of the Catholic Body, which the Spirit of love diffuses through its members. "Let no one say, I will follow him, because he has made me a Christian; or I will follow him, because he has baptized me. For neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God, that giveth the increase. And God is love, and he that dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love, and God in him. For no one who preaches the name of Christ, and who exhibits and ministers the sacraments of Christ, ought to be followed against the unity of Christ."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cont. Lit. Petiliani. iii. 6.

## CHAPTER XIII.

HOW FAR THE ORIGINAL PRINCIPLE OF SUBSCRIPTION TO  
THE ENGLISH FORMULARIES IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE  
RULE OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY,

THE last Chapter has shown how untenable are the principles, on which the English Formularies are usually subscribed. But what is to be said respecting that principle, on which they were originally proposed, and on which their compilers rested their authority? Would it not be sufficient if this could be revived; and should we not then have a rule, which was consistent at once with Scripture, and with the teaching of the ancient Church? This shall be considered in the present Chapter.

The ancient principle of Church-authority has been shown to have depended upon the belief, that the gift of guidance, which had its dwelling in Our Lord, had been inherited by the collective body of His followers. It was essential, therefore, to its application that they should act together. Each Bishop was listened to with confidence, when he taught his people the way of truth, because he was a representative of that society of Christians, in whose name and with whose sanction he spoke. Though he was individually the representative of Our Lord, yet he retained this function because he was a member of the Body. So that the Mission possessed by each Bishop, and transmitted by him to his inferior clergy, was only the consequence of that power of guidance, of which the Body at large was possessed. It might be conveyed to him either virtually, as when one man speaks for a crowd,

which gives an implicit sanction to his words ; or formally, as when a delegate is explicitly appointed by an organized society. In the earliest age of the Church, the Mission of each Bishop had partaken of the former character ; because the Church's organization had not yet been moulded into shape by time and opportunity ; as years went on, Mission had come to be a formal sanction, transmitted to each Bishop, either by his immediate Metropolitan, or by the Primate. This arrangement arose out of that system, by which the Church's unity had been secured : the combination, namely, of many Bishops into a Province, and the relation of all Provinces to the Successor of St. Peter. By this means was the whole body enabled to co-operate ; and the rule, on which Our Lord had framed the College of His Apostles, was perpetuated in their successors.

This system, which necessarily made the successor of St. Peter the last standard of reference in all disputes of doctrine, Henry VIII. found it expedient to change. The Pope (whether for good or bad reasons) had refused to annul his marriage with Catherine ; and thus to enable him to obtain a younger bride. And Elizabeth was pressed by a similar motive ; for her legitimacy rested on a denial of that power of the Pope, by which her mother's marriage had been declared invalid. But what new system of Church-authority was to be found ? To claim it nakedly for the civil power, as was done subsequently in Germany, was too glaring a profaneness to be successful ; though it was afterwards occasionally attempted. It seemed safer, however, to employ the machinery which was supplied by the Church in Henry's own dominions. But on what principle could the English Bishops be shown to possess that power, which they were designed to exercise ? For it is obvious that no Bishop has authority by himself to decide matters of faith : he must act with the concurrence, and as the representative, of his brethren. Otherwise each diocese of the Church Catholic might have a different Creed. But was it not possible to prescribe some limits, less extensive than those of the Catholic Church, which might give this power to the Bishops, who were included in them ? The chemistry of Nature seems to depend



upon the fermentation of its materials upon that gigantic scale, which human agency is unable to imitate. Yet wonderful results have been effected by rivalling, as far as possible, the grandeur of her operations. Was there no way by which a portion of the Church could be cut off from the rest, and united into a whole, so as to pronounce doctrinal decisions with the same security as the collective Body of Christ?

This was the problem proposed to Henry VIII. and his obsequious Parliament. They appear to have solved it by the consideration, that in ancient times the Christian Emperors had not only possessed great authority in religious as well as civil questions—a thing freely conceded to all believing Princes—but that the subject Bishops, whom the Emperors had called together, had given final decisions in matters of faith. Here, then, was a limit which might fence round the Church of England, and give its Prelates the like authority. For was not England an Empire also, or at all events might it not be so declared? Such, at least, was the judgment of Henry VIII. and his Parliament. They decreed (24 *Henry VIII.* 12,) that “this realm of England is an *Empire*, and so hath been accepted in the world,” “the *body Spiritual* whereof having power, when any cause of the Law divine happened to come in question, or of spiritual learning, then it was declared, interpreted, and showed by that part of the said body politic, called the Spirituality, now being usually called the English Church, which always hath been reputed, and also found of that sort, that both for knowledge, integrity, and *sufficiency of number*, it hath been always thought, and is also at this hour, *sufficient and meet of itself*, without the intermeddling of any exterior person, or persons, to declare and *determine all such doubts*, and to administer all such offices and duties, as to their rooms *spiritual* doth appertain.”

Here, then, was a principle, which if it could be maintained, would exactly meet what was wanted. The self-same power of resolving all questions, which had formerly been possessed by the Church Catholic, when it sojourned in the Empire of Rome, it might still be alleged to possess, when sojourning in the British Empire. The Imperial limits, which had determined its capacity of united action in the one case, existed

also in the other. How much of its power was due to the Bishops, as representing the Apostles, and how much to the King, as possessing an immediate delegation from God, through his Divine right to govern, was not clearly stated. This was a point, respecting which their several partizans might dispute; but that between them they possessed sufficient authority to bind the conscience was affirmed in express words both by Church and State, and was uniformly witnessed by their actions.

The combination of the two powers, which were thus amalgamated, has led to much of that uncertainty, by which those who desire to understand on what principle their faith is dependent, have ever since been perplexed. The two tendencies still exist: the majority of the laity accept, or submit to, the Church's teaching, because she is the National Church; the assent of the public, sanctioned by solemn Acts of the Legislature, and graced by the concurrence of Royalty, stands in the place of that Right Divine which was asserted by the Tudors and the Stuarts. On the other hand, a large body of the Laity, and still more of the Clergy, rely upon the fact, that the English Bishops are successors to the Apostles. The two principles had their advocates from an early period; if the Royal authority predominated under the Tudors, the Episcopal principle was asserted under the Stuarts.<sup>1</sup> Cranmer was the type of the one; Laud, Andrewes, and Overall of the other. Cranmer<sup>2</sup> maintained not only that all Mission was derived from Princes, but that they might confer Orders also; and he affirmed that the Apostles themselves had no authority from Christ, but merely took the lead in the Church, as a provisional measure, till it could be assumed by some secular Prince. And the principle, on which the submission of the clergy to Henry VIII. was urged by his emissaries,<sup>3</sup> implied the King to be, as the

<sup>1</sup> This is pointed out by Dr. Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, vol. ii. p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Questions concerning the Sacraments, No. 9.—*Jenkyne's Cranmer*, vol. ii. p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Among the arguments used with the monks of Greenwich to induce them to admit the King's Supremacy, "We affirmed unto them," writes Roland Lee, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to Cromwell (A.D. 1535), "that they were the King's subjects, and that by the law of God they owed him their entire

*Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* styled him, "the fountain of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Andrewes and Overall, as we see by a letter of the last to Grotius, dwelt upon the fact, that the King did not give judgment *himself* on any spiritual matter, but merely confirmed the decisions of his theologians.<sup>5</sup>

In the fusion, then, of these two powers, it is not clearly stated how much was ascribed to each; and probably it was thought the wisest course to evade the question. One point, however, is certain, that all subjects of this realm were supposed to be bound in conscience to admit every conclusion, which was sanctioned by the concurrent authority of the Crown and the Clergy. So that the two, between them, were to be relied upon with that plenary confidence which the Primitive Church ascribed to the decisions of the collective Episcopate. The Act of Parliament<sup>6</sup> which was passed A.D. 1541, as a

obedience; and that the Pope, and Saint Francis, and they themselves, with their vows, oaths, or professions, could take away not one jot of the obedience which they owe to the King by God's Law. And we showed them that none of the King's subjects could submit himself, or bear obedience to any other Prince, or Prelate, without the King's consent. And if he did, he did the King's Grace great injury, and offended God, breaking His laws commanding obedience towards Princes. And in this behalf we showed that the King, being a Christian Prince, was a spiritual man, and that obedience, which they owed to the King by God's law, was a spiritual obedience, and in spiritual causes; for they would be obedient, but only in temporal causes."—*Letters relating to the Suppression of Monasteries*, by Thos. Wright, *Esq.* xv. p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> De Officio Judicum.

<sup>5</sup> "Nec sibi sumere, nec in aliis potestatibus laicis probare, ut ipsi per se de rebus sacris aut divinis, præcipue Catholicæ fidei, judicium ferant."—*Epistolæ Præst. Vir.* No. 292. Vid. also *History of Erastianism*, p. 11, 20.

<sup>6</sup> "As his Highness is our Sovereign liege Lord, and supreme Head of the Church of England, so his Grace taketh the care and solicitude thereof, most diligently foreseeing and providing all that can be to the quiet, union, concord, &c. of the same: considering, also, that nothing so much troubleth the Commonwealth, and hindereth quiet and concord, as diversity in opinions and belief especially in things that concern Almighty God and His Religion. And of his prudence and wisdom well weighing, that out of sundry outward parts and places there have sprung, been sown and set forth, divers and sundry heretical, erroneous, and dangerous opinions and doctrines in the religion of Christ, whereby some of his Grace's liege people might be not only disquieted and moved to variances, strifes, commotions, and seditions among themselves, but also induced and allured to unfaithfulness, misbelief, miscerance, and contempt of God, to the utter confusion and damnation of their souls, unless by his Majesty's prudence some good remedy should be ordained for the same: hath of his bountiful royal clemency thereof appointed, established, and or-

preparation for certain resolutions on the subject of religion, which were to be agreed upon by the Clergy, and approved by the Crown, enjoins that everything which was thus sanctioned should be "*believed, obeyed, and performed*" "by all his Grace's subjects, and all other resiants and inhabitants within this his Grace's realm." And the same deference for everything in which these two powers agreed was claimed by Convocation. The "general affirmation, that the Church possessed 'authority in controversies of faith,' was carried out by the ninth and twelfth Canons, wherein it was said, that to 'separate from the communion of Saints, as approved in the Church of England,' and 'for any sort of ministers or laypersons, or either of them, to join together and make rules in causes ecclesiastical without the King's authority, and submit themselves to be ruled by them,' were '*wicked errors*;' and if any affirmed that they are not bound by the decrees made by the Clergy in Synod, and ratified by the King's authority, 'as not having given their voices unto them,' they are by the

dained the Archbishops and sundry Bishops of both Provinces of Canterbury and York, within this his realm, and also a great number of the best learned, honestest, and most virtuous sort of Doctors of Divinity, men of discretion, judgment, and good dispositions, of this said Realm, to the intent, according to the very Gospel and law of God—they should declare in writing and publish as well the principal articles and points of our faith and belief, with declaration, true understanding, and observation of such other expedient points, as by them with his Grace's advice, counsel, and consent shall be thought needful and expedient: and also for the lawful rites, ceremonies, and observation of God's service within this his Grace's Realm: Be it, therefore, enacted, ordained, and established by the King's Majesty, with the assent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and authority of the same, that all and every determinations, declarations, decrees, definitions, resolutions, and ordinances, as according to God's word, and Christ's Gospel, by his Majesty's advice, and confirmation by his letters patent under his Grace's great seal, shall at any time hereafter be made, set forth, declared, decreed, defined, resolved, and ordained, by the said Archbishops, Bishops, and Doctors, now appointed, or other persons hereafter to be appointed by his royal Majesty, or else by the whole Clergy of England, in and upon the matter of Christ's religion, and the Christian faith and lawful rites, ceremonies, and observations of the same; shall be in all and every point, limitation, and circumstance thereof, by all his Grace's subjects, and other resiants and inhabitants within this his Grace's realm, and other his Grace's dominions, fully *believed, obeyed, observed, and performed*, to all purposes, intents, constructions, and interpretations, upon the pain and penalties therein to be comprised," &c.—32 *Henry VIII.* 26. *Gibson's Cod.* p. 345.



140th Canon 'excommunicated and not restored, until they repent and publicly revoke that wicked error.'"<sup>7</sup>

Nor was this a bare assertion ; for the State proceeded to require submission, under the heaviest penalties, to everything which was imposed by the combined authority of the Crown and the Clergy. Not only was compliance demanded with the outward forms which were established by their co-operation ; but no belief was allowed, except that which they sanctioned. As late as in the reign of James I. two men were burnt alive for denying the Trinity ; and minor punishments were inflicted by the High-Commission Court in abundance. The 5th of Elizabeth, 23, mentions "matter of heresy," "or error in matters of religion or doctrine now received and allowed," as well as the refusal "to come to Divine Service," or "to receive the Holy Communion, as it is now commonly used to be received in the Church of England," as grounds for excommunication, and, therefore, for imprisonment "without bail."

Now, in considering how far this system accords with the rules of the Church Catholic, we must take it under its best aspect, without considering whether it came up in all points to its own professions. This is the fairest way of dealing with any system, when its principles are in question ; and no system could stand without such equitable allowance. No question, therefore, shall be made about the gift of Orders. Let it be assumed that Consecration and Ordination continued to be ministered, and that men were set apart as heretofore for Priestly functions. But the Church was not instituted merely to minister sacraments and sacramentals, but likewise for the maintenance and teaching of truth. For this purpose she empowers each of her ministers to speak in her name. And every one who does so, speaks with the authority of all his brethren ; his words have the sanction of that collective Body, which professes to be inhabited by the Holy Ghost. This has been shown to be the principle which is involved in Mission. No one can teach save by the authority of God ; this authority comes to him through the Body of the Church ; and if this authority should be withdrawn, his commission to teach or minister sacraments

<sup>7</sup> Vid. History of Erastianism, p. 23.



would be suspended. For though he may have been lawfully set apart for that purpose, yet he can only discharge his function through the perpetual presence of the Holy Ghost, and that presence is bestowed upon him for the purpose of witnessing to doctrine, as well as to give efficacy to his priestly acts.

This Mission, then, to teach and minister, had always been supposed to be derived from the collective Church. If it was transmitted through a single functionary, whether Bishop, Metropolitan, or Patriarch, it was because he acted on behalf of the whole Church. The collective Body<sup>8</sup> spoke through each of its ministers. So that its participation, either virtual or avowed, was requisite to that act by which priestly functions were sanctioned. And how was this Mission bestowed in the English Church? It was supposed to come from the Body of the Church at large, which was as capable of acting in this relation, as the Church Universal itself. And that which qualified it for such functions was the authority of the Sovereign, which made the Bishops of our two Provinces into a Body, just as the collective Bishops of Christendom had formerly been combined into the one Body of Christ. This was the assertion of the 24th of Henry VIII. 12, and the ground on which the title<sup>9</sup> "Head of the Church" was important. It implied, that the Bishops who stood to Henry in the relation of subjects, were combined by that circumstance into a Body, or Spiritual Entity, and had the same power, there-

<sup>8</sup> *Unitas tenet, unitas dimittit. vid. supr. c. iv. p. 90.*

<sup>9</sup> To deprive the King of any "title, united to the Imperial Crown of this Realm," was made High Treason by 35th of Henry VIII. 3. The Convocation of 1603 speaks of "the Sacred Synod," meaning thereby the Clergy of the two Provinces, who, though meeting separately, were supposed to make up a single Body, because the clergy of one nation. So Gibson speaks of "the Sacred Synod," as meaning "the Convocation of 1603" (*Codex*, xl. i. p. 931); and Stillingfleet: "We do not say that the Convocation at Westminster is the representative Church of England, as the Church of England is a National Church; for that is only representative of this Province, there being another Convocation in the other Province; but the consent of both Convocations is the representative National Church of England."—*Unreasonableness of Separation*, p. 3. The Irish Convocations were not noticed; because Ireland was supposed to be either a dependency, in which case they would be only an appendage to the Body; or to be a separate kingdom, in which case they would be a separate Body.

fore, to grant Mission or determine doctrine, which had formerly been possessed by the Universal Church. This power must either belong to every Bishop individually, or to the whole Body taken collectively, or else there must be some rule or law, which prescribes what number of Bishops is essential to its exercise. If the Church of Christ was supposed to consist of homogeneous ingredients, which would crystallize into their appointed shape, whenever a certain quantity of them was allowed to act freely together, it was necessary that there should be some measure or receptacle in which the requisite quantity might be set apart, and have opportunity for internal action. Such a measure was the recognition of the King as the "one Supreme Head;" those who admitted this claim became themselves on the same principle a "Body Spiritual;" and the two between them possessed those rights, which enabled them to act as a *Moral Person*, in resolving religious questions for the subject nation. Elizabeth, indeed, did not call herself "Head of the Church," as her Father and her Brother had done, but she exercised the same powers as they had done, and asserted herself to possess the same rights; and the title of "Supreme Head of the Church of England" still belongs to our Sovereigns by Act of Parliament. It was assigned to them by 25 Henry VIII. 21, s. 2, and by 37 Henry VIII. 17, s. 3, which were revived by the 1st of Elizabeth; and it was again bestowed in 2 and 3 Anne, 11.

It has been disputed whether the powers which were thus possessed by the Crown, were inherent in it by its own right, or had been transferred from the Papacy. Bramhall says, "Whatsoever power our laws did divest the Pope of, they invested the King with it."<sup>10</sup> But Mr. Palmer maintains that the "Papal jurisdiction.....was suppressed, not transferred to the King."<sup>11</sup> The doubt seems to respect those powers which made up the Papal Supremacy, and which had gradually devolved upon the Successor of St. Peter with the acquiescence of the Church. Now, it will be found, that from the time of Henry VIII. all those powers which have been shown to be characteristic of the Papal Supremacy, have

<sup>10</sup> Schism Guarded, p. 340.

<sup>11</sup> Treatise on the Church, i. 355.

either been unexercised altogether, or have been exercised by the Crown. Since the Papal Supremacy was the Church's instrument for combining order and unity, it is natural that so far as these have since been dispensed with, the power which maintained them should be left in abeyance. But in the three departments, in which the Papal Supremacy was supposed to be exercised (*Cap. xi.*) the very same power which was possessed by the Pope, has, by different Acts of Parliament, been bestowed upon our Sovereigns. The final judgment in appeal was given in the first instance to the King in Chancery, with the expectation, probably, that he would appoint Spiritual persons for the decision of questions of doctrine. Still it rested with himself what he would do; and the judges selected would at all events be the representatives of the Civil Power, and not of the Church. And the decision has since been transferred to the Sovereign in person, advised by a Committee of her Council. The Crown gained complete control over the Councils of the Clergy by the 25th of Henry VIII. 19: they can neither meet, nor make constitutions without its consent; and its sanction is required to give validity to their conclusions. And as to the third head; a right of interfering in ecclesiastical appointments—this power also, though disguised by the *Congé d'Elire*, belongs virtually to the Crown. It was directly exercised in the time of Edward VI. and the Crown possesses it in the same immediate manner in all the Colonial dioceses.

If the authority, then, which made up the Papal Supremacy, is not plainly exercised by our Kings, the reason is, because authority has been allowed to go to sleep, and religious questions are left in a great measure to men's own inclinations. The Clergy teach what they like in their parishes; and the Bishops observe what order they please in their dioceses. But if that greater uniformity were aimed at, which it was the purpose of the Papal Supremacy to maintain, it would be by the Crown only that it could be effected. And of this there are instances enough in our history. The Gorham Case, the most important judgment probably of a doctrinal kind, which has been given since the time of Elizabeth, was decided by the Crown. The authority of the

Crown over Church-Synods will not be disputed. And as to ecclesiastical appointments, did not James I. suspend Abbot, and Elizabeth, Grindal? Did not the last-named Sovereign deprive fourteen Bishops at once, and put others in their room? The Nonjuring Bishops were deprived by William III. on temporal grounds, but Elizabeth interposed as arbiter of the religion of her people. What acts of her own can the Church of England exhibit, which indicate equal authority over her members? And has not the Civil Power interfered in like manner in enacting Articles of Faith? Were not the clergy of the Northern Province required to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, by 13 Eliz. 12, to which the Northern Convocation had given no assent? Was not the Book of Common Prayer imposed upon the Church without its concurrence by the 1st of Elizabeth? Was it not altered by James I. and the Catechism annexed, on his own authority? He had stated, in his first proclamation, that he would "proceed according to the laws and customs of this realm, by advice of his Council, or in his High Court of Parliament, or by Convocation of his Clergy, as he should find reason to lead him." And the course which he adopted was the same which had been taken by his predecessor. "It was the constant maxim of Queen Elizabeth," says Dr. Cardwell, "derived not so much from the Statute of Supremacy, as from the inseparable rights and prerogatives of the Crown, that she might establish or repeal Canons, and might ordain or abolish any religious rite or ceremony; and that in so doing she might call in the aid of her Council, of a Commission of Divines, of a Convocation, or a Parliament, as she judged most expedient. In the case of the Articles she considered their authority to rest upon her ratification of them, after they had been prepared by the Synod of the Clergy for her examination and approval. This doctrine was adopted by Archbishops Whitgift and Bancroft, and was sanctioned by solemn decisions from the highest legal authorities."<sup>12</sup>

It is plain, then, that so far as any form of government exists in the Church of England, it is practically in the hands of the Crown. Our Church-history but too truly illustrates

<sup>12</sup> Documentary Annals, ii. 172.



the assertion of Parliament: "Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by, under, and from, your Royal Majesty." (37 *Henry VIII.* 17.) The only question is not, whether this was transferred from the Pope to the Crown, but whether the Crown had first been robbed of it by the Pope. When Christianity first entered the world, it came assuredly as a spiritual system, and it was exposed to heathen persecution, because it would not yield that compliance to worldly rulers, which was freely conceded by the systems of Paganism. When the world became Christian, the Emperors gained a measure of that power by kindness, which they had been unable to extort by the sword. But it passed again into the hands of the Church on the fall of the Roman Empire, and was lodged in the Successor of the chief Apostle. And it is difficult to see what right the Princes of the earth had to extort it a second time. Still it has been gained in a measure even by Princes in communion with Rome; and it would probably be wise in the Church to submit to a large amount of interference, provided her cardinal principles were secured. But it is a different thing when the right invaded is not the Supremacy only, but the Primacy of St. Peter; and when the worldly power assails that principle, on which the Church's unity is based, and on which her promise of perpetuity depends. And this it is which appears to have been especially endamaged by the Supremacy claimed for the British throne.

For the purpose which the Crown's Supremacy was intended to effect, was exactly that which Our Lord's promise to St. Peter was designed to secure. The operation of that promise, as we have seen, was to form the College of Apostles into a single body, and thus to enable them to act together in the maintenance of truth. This is the precise object assigned to it by the early Fathers. And this is just that which Henry VIII. proposed to imitate by his Supremacy. Its purpose was to unite the clergy of the English Empire into a single "*Body Spiritual*." Thus was there a new principle of combination in place of that provided by Our Lord. Hence the assertion of the Supremacy was the first actual



step in Henry's proceedings ; and on its legality depends the lawfulness of the whole. Under cover of the maintenance of the Succession, he compelled all his subjects to pledge themselves to it with the sanction of an oath, A. D. 1533, and the same obligation was reimposed by the first statute of Elizabeth. Upon this, therefore, stood all the doctrinal changes, which were subsequently made ; for thus only were they rendered binding. The clergy, who enacted or allowed them, would have had no power to decide questions of doctrine, had not this act isolated them from the rest of the world. If we ask, why we should accept the Thirty-nine Articles, we are referred by Churchmen to the sanction given by the Convocation of Canterbury in 1562 ; if we ask, why Englishmen should be guided by the Synod of London, rather than by the contemporaneous Council of Trent, the reason is, that its members formed the "Body Spiritual" of the English nation. But it was the Royal Supremacy by which the English Bishops were first moulded into a Body, and thereby were supposed to gain power to decide questions of doctrine.

The lawfulness, then, of the change must turn upon the legality of the Supremacy, on which it was based. On what principle could the Crown bestow this power upon its Bishops ? Local Councils were no doubt held in the Primitive Church, and they adopted important decisions ; but the authority exerted was always understood to be that of the one Catholic Communion. The local bodies, therefore, which assembled, spoke of themselves as representing their brethren ; they were always in actual communion with the rest of the world, and made open or implicit reference to the authority of the whole Church. Such local Synods, therefore, afford no justification for a proceeding, the very principle of which was its isolation. For to affirm, as was required by the oath of Supremacy, that no foreign Prelate had *any Spiritual authority* in this realm, was to exclude all reference to any but native sources. So that it cut us off from the whole Episcopate of Europe, as well as from the Bishop of Rome.

That such were the principles respectively of the ancient Church and of the so-called English Reformation, was plainly

avowed on both sides. The local Councils of the former frequently declared, that their whole authority depended on their giving expression to the mind of the Collective Body of the Church. The words of Alexander of Alexandria, in the Synod held against Arius, have already been quoted: he appealed to all his brethren, as "being of one mind," and "giving judgment with" him; he declared himself to set forth "the Apostolical doctrines of the Church:" "we acknowledge one and one only Catholic and Apostolic Church, perpetually indestructible, though the whole world should war against it."<sup>13</sup> And so the local Council of Milevis grounds its interpretation of Scripture upon the fact, that so "the Catholic Church, everywhere diffused, has always understood it."<sup>14</sup> The contrary principle, introduced by Henry VIII., is laid down by Burnet: "Another thing was also established, which opened the way to all that followed; that every national Church was a complete Body within itself: so that the Church of England, with the authority and concurrence of their Head and King, might examine and reform all errors and corruptions, whether in doctrine or worship."<sup>15</sup> And to the same circumstance did Sir Thomas More refer, in that memorable speech before his sentence, which put to shame the pusillanimity of his contemporaries: "'This indictment is grounded upon an Act of Parliament, directly repugnant to the laws of God and His Holy Church.' And in order to the proof of his assertion he declared among other things, that this kingdom alone being but one member, and a small part of the Church, was not to make a particular law disagreeing with the general law of Christ's Universal Catholic Church, no more than the City of London, being but one member in respect to the whole kingdom, might enact a law against an Act of Parliament to be binding to the whole realm. 'And, therefore, my Lord, I do not think myself bound to conform my conscience to the counsel of one Kingdom, against the general consent of all Christendom.'"<sup>16</sup>

There can be no doubt that, according to the principles of

<sup>13</sup> Harduin, i. p. 307, 306.

<sup>14</sup> Id. l. 1218. Canon ii.

<sup>15</sup> Hist. of Reform. vol. i. Pref. p. xiv.

<sup>16</sup> State Trials, vol. i. p. 62. Ed. 1776.

the ancient Church, Sir Thomas More was right; and that he died a martyr for that article of the Creed, "one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." But the contrary system continues to be maintained by the oath of Supremacy, which the thirty-sixth Canon imposes upon the Clergy. The theory of the ancient Church was, that every Bishop had authority throughout the whole world, though the laws of the Church indicated the particular locality in which that authority should be exercised. But the oath of Supremacy denies all authority, spiritual or temporal, to any Bishop who is not a subject of the Crown. It excludes the authority of the Bishop of New York, therefore, as much as that of the Bishop of Rome. It does not deny either of them to be a Bishop, or that he is able to discharge those functions which are inseparable from that office. But whereas the Episcopal authority is one, and is held conjointly by the whole College of Bishops, this oath limits its exercise to the particular Bishops, who form the Spiritual Council of our earthly Sovereign. And whereas it was observed by Nazianzen, that St. Cyprian had authority throughout the whole world, this oath, in its anxiety to exclude the Successor of St. Peter, cuts off the succession of the residue of the Apostles.

Perhaps it may be said, that when authority is denied to foreign Bishops, it is not meant to exclude their influence in General Councils, but only such immediate jurisdiction as was claimed by the Bishop of Rome throughout all Christendom. And in support of such a notion it is possible no doubt to quote some general expressions both of Henry VIII. and of Cranmer, respecting their willingness to submit to a free General Council. But it is clear that such expressions had no real meaning. They would never have submitted to a Council, which was called and presided over by the Pope: yet, now that Europe is divided into different kingdoms, by whom could the Church be called together but by its chief Bishop? But the best proof that such professions were wholly nugatory, is, on the one hand, that British Synods adopted such final decisions as superseded the appeal to any higher authority; and, on the other, that an Act<sup>17</sup> of Parliament for-

<sup>17</sup> By 25 Henry VIII. 21. s. 20, it is forbidden "that any person, religious or

bade, and continues to forbid, any English ecclesiastic from attending Councils held out of the King's dominions.

The history of the Donatists is the only thing in ancient times, which affords any parallel to the system thus introduced in England. Other points there were, such as re-baptism, in which they differed from the English Church; but they agreed with it in maintaining, that the Bishops of a single Province had a right to prescribe laws for its inhabitants, without the concurrence of the residue of the Church. This is the great principle, on which they were assailed by St. Augustin; and it is the same which is involved in the oath of Supremacy. St. Augustin's whole argument is expressed in the sentence; "that which has been settled by the decree of the Universal Church, ought to be preferred to that which depends on the authority of a single Bishop, or of the Council of a single Province."<sup>18</sup> Whereas it is the original principle of the English Church, that whatsoever is determined by our own Bishops, with the authority of the Crown, is at once to be believed by all Englishmen, however contrary to the decrees of the Universal Church. This is the theory of a national religion, as it has been carried out by our laws, and explained by our Formularies.

And as this notion, that the Bishops of a single Province might determine conclusively in matters of faith, has no early precedent but that of the Donatists; so the idea of sustaining it by reference to the Royal authority, has no more support from history than from Scripture. The Successors of the Apostles cannot possess more right to interpret God's will

other, residing in any the King's dominions, shall from henceforth depart out of the King's dominions to or for any visitation, congregation, or assembly for religion, but that all such visitations, congregations, and assemblies, shall be within the King's dominions." In the year 1551, great attempts were made by Charles V. to induce the German Protestants to attend the Council of Trent, for which end a safe conduct was granted them by the Council. Bullinger wrote to Cranmer to dissuade the English from attending it. Cranmer replied: as to the point "that I would advise the King's Majesty not to send any delegate to the Council of Trent, there was no need of any advice of mine to dissuade him from a measure, which never came into his mind." And he proceeds to express his desire for a rival assembly, to be composed of the principal Protestant ministers.—*Original Letters*. (Park. Soc.) xiii. p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> De Baptism. C. Don. ii. 2.



with authority, than the Apostles themselves. But the Apostles possessed this power collectively. St. Philip or St. Matthew could not have separated themselves from their brethren, and imposed laws upon any separate body of Christians, at variance with those which the residue of the Apostles imposed upon the body at large. And to guard against such a division in the College of Apostles, was the very purpose, as we learn from Antiquity, for which the Primacy of St. Peter was instituted by Our Lord. But it is implied by the principles of the English Church, that though St. Philip and St. Matthew possessed no such power while they continued in the same country with their brethren, yet that they would have acquired such power by removing into this kingdom, and obtaining the sanction of its ruler to their acts. Or, again, if they had settled in one of the two Provinces of York or Canterbury, they would have had no right to make doctrinal decisions to the exclusion of such Apostles, as might have settled in the other Province; but they would have acquired such a power, if they had gained the sanction of the Sovereign of the whole country, and been the only Apostles whom he had called his subjects. On no other ground, certainly, was it that the Bishops of our two Provinces imposed doctrinal resolutions, to which all the clergy were compelled to subscribe, which were at variance with those which were received throughout the rest of Christendom, and which were unknown, if not repugnant, to Antiquity. Why do Englishmen declare that "faith only," to the exclusion of obedience, is necessary to a participation in the merits of Christ's Sacrifice, or that "the Church of Rome hath erred," or that "General Councils may err," or that Confirmation and Matrimony are not "Sacraments of the Gospel," or that "the Sacrifices of Masses" are "blasphemous fables," or that "the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England," but because these things were agreed upon by the Bishops of our two Provinces, and assented to by the Crown?

Now, is it not clear that the function thus assumed by our Sovereigns is exactly that, which, according to the laws of the ancient Church, belonged to the chief Apostle? Its purpose is to constitute the Bishops into a *whole*, so that they may



be able to make final settlement in questions of doctrine. To ground this right on the statement that England was "an Empire," as was done by 24 Henry VIII. 12, was to mistake an accidental circumstance in the Church's history for the principle of its incorporation. The Church happened at a particular moment to lie within the precincts of a single Empire, as at another it had been gathered together in an Upper Chamber; but neither of these circumstances were anything more than accidents of its existence. St. Augustin referred to Barbarian Tribes, who lay beyond the limits of civilization, as contributing already to the testimony of the Church, and forming part of its universality.<sup>19</sup> The example, therefore, of the Roman Empire afforded no justification to that oath of Supremacy, which ascribed a new and unheard-of authority to the English Sovereigns. The purpose of that oath was to break up the one Body of Christ into divers National Societies. Christ had built His Church upon His chief Apostle, that its extension through the world might leave its continuity unaffected. For this was a principle, which was independent of the affinities of race, or of the rights of temporal government. The new principle which came in its place, was the substitution of a human for a divine order of things. It had its ground no doubt in that natural relation of mankind, of which national union is an expression. It has its respectability, therefore, among men, and will continue, probably, as long as that national greatness with which it is so intimately associated. But when national distinctions cease to exist, and mankind, small and great, are assembled before God, it will be seen whether it was wiser, like Henry VIII. and his minion Cromwell, to break up the Church Catholic for the sake of ruling it, or, like More and Fisher, to die for its unity.

<sup>19</sup> Cont. Crescon. iii. 71.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ARGUMENTS WHICH ARE ALLEGED IN DEFENCE OF THE  
ANGLICAN SYSTEM OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

THE original principle of the Anglican system has been shown to be as indefensible as those which have superseded it. The latter are only modifications of individual judgment; the former can appeal to nothing but the authority which certain isolated Bishops derive from the sanction of the Crown. But the generations which found themselves in this state of separation, while the system of private judgment had not yet become predominant, looked round for grounds on which to justify a system, which was endeared to them by the prejudices of education, and the assent of a great nation. These feelings are powerful even in the present day, when the Establishment does not embrace half the British people; but so long as the whole nation hung together, they must have been well-nigh irresistible.

The two strongest arguments which have been alleged, are no doubt the examples of the Ancient British, and of the Modern Greek Church. From the first, it is said, we inherit that independence from Rome, which was its peculiar privilege: the other shows that though out of communion with the Successor of St. Peter, we are in communion with the Catholic Church. Let us take a brief survey of these two arguments.

The alleged independence of the early British Church was not heard of when the separation from Rome was first effected: it was an after-thought, devised by those who

wished to account for our position. It shall be shown, 1st, that the British Church was not independent of Rome; 2ndly, that its alleged separation from Rome would have been wholly indefensible; 3rdly, that had the British Church possessed this privilege, it would be nothing to the Church of England; 4thly, that the Church of England was not separated from Rome by her own act, but by the violent and unlawful interference of the civil power.

1st. It is agreed, both by our own and foreign historians, that the persons who introduced Christianity into this country, were sent here by the Bishops of Rome. Bede affirms the English Church to owe its first existence to Pope Eleutherus,<sup>1</sup> A.D. 156, and that "Palladius was sent by Celestine, the Roman Pontiff, to the Scots that believed in Christ, to be their first Bishop."<sup>2</sup> This last statement is confirmed by the Chronicle of Prosper,<sup>3</sup> who adds, that when the Christian faith was endangered by the heresy of the Pelagians, it was the same Pope Celestine who sent Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, into Britain "as his representative," A.D. 429. To no part of Europe does Celestine's attention seem to have been more directed than to these islands. Palladius, whose mission was to the Scoti in Ireland, and whom Usher<sup>4</sup> supposes to have been their Primate, died A.D. 431. He was succeeded by St. Patrick,<sup>5</sup> who also received his orders and mission from Celestine, and whose Canons<sup>6</sup> expressly recognize the principle of appealing to the Roman See.

These circumstances render it improbable that the British

<sup>1</sup> Beda, i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Id. i. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Germanum Antisiodorensem Episcopum vice suâ mittit, ut deturbatis hæreticis, Brittanos ad Catholicam fidem dirigat.—*Bib. Pat.* viii. p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> Brit. Eccles. Antiquitates, Cap. xvi. p. 800.

<sup>5</sup> Ab ipso Celestino Papâ Patricium ordinatum esse Pontificem, præter Malmesburiensem jam citatum, etiam Jocelinus et Officii Patriciani Scriptor affirmant, &c.—*Usher*, c. xvii. p. 841.

<sup>6</sup> Si in illa (the chair of St. Patrick) cum suis sapientibus, facile sanari non poterit talis causa prædictæ negotiationis: ad sedem Apostolicam decernimus esse mittendum; id est ad Petri Apostoli Cathedram, auctoritatem Romæ urbis habentem, &c.—*Vetus Codex Eccl. Armachanæ. in Usher's Religion of the Ancient Irish*, cap. viii. p. 87.

A shorter, but equivalent Canon, is given by Wilkins, vol. i. p. 6.

Islands were less bound to Rome than France or Spain, which cannot be proved to have been indebted to the Roman Bishops for their early teachers. It is asserted, however, that Britain possessed the same privilege with the Island of Cyprus, which the Council of Ephesus protected from the encroachments of the Patriarch of Antioch, when he desired to interfere in the appointment of its Bishops. Britain, in like manner, it is said, was not included in the Patriarchate of Rome, which embraced the rest of Western Christendom. But there is not the slightest trace of any such distinction in ancient times. It has been seen<sup>7</sup> that Patriarchal authority, in its stricter sense, was exercised by the early Bishops of Rome, within a very limited district. The Bishops of Gaul and Spain were neither consecrated by them, nor attended their ordinary Councils. But when any great occasion arose, which required the action of the whole Church, the Successor of St. Peter was consulted. And as the Church's system was gradually consolidated, the duties of a Patriarch devolved upon the Primate, where no other Patriarch existed. But the *authority* of the Successor of St. Peter had been admitted and exercised, long before it grew into that particular shape which it acquired in the Roman Patriarchate. Of this we have an example in the case of Marcian<sup>8</sup> of Arles, when Faustinus and other Bishops of the Province of Lyons solicited St. Stephen to depose him.

The same kind of authority was certainly exercised by the Bishops of Rome in these islands, both in British and Saxon times. Two years before the Council of Ephesus had recognized the privileges of Cyprus, Celestine sent Germanus as "his deputy" into England. In that very year did he consecrate his Deacon Palladius, as the first Bishop, or (according to Usher) the Primate of Ireland. These were surely instances of the interposition of a superior. Not only were there British Bishops at Arles, as shall be noticed presently, but St. Athanasius<sup>9</sup> states them to have taken part in that Council of Sardica, which gave the Pope such especial authority in cases of Appeal. Gildas, the chief remaining British

<sup>7</sup> Vid. c. v. p. 97, and c. x. p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> Vid. c. x. p. 157.

<sup>9</sup> Apologia c. Arian. i. vol. i. p. 123.



writer, speaks of St. Peter as "Prince of the Apostles," of the power of the keys as bestowed especially on "Peter and his successors," and of "the seat of St. Peter,"<sup>10</sup> as equivalent to ecclesiastical power. And the opinion of the early Saxon Church (to say nothing of the mission of Augustin and Theodore,) is sufficiently shown by the words of Bede; that Pope Gregory "bore the Pontifical Primacy over all the world."<sup>11</sup>

To this it is objected, that there were peculiarities in the early British Church, which indicate its Eastern origin; and, therefore, that the Bishop of Rome could not have possessed that power which belonged to him in such Churches as had been founded by his ancestors. The main thing referred to is a difference in the time of keeping Easter, respecting which Bishop Colman,<sup>12</sup> at the conference at Whitby, referred to the example of St. John, who had observed the Quartodeciman usage. But other points are mentioned, as for instance, that the word *Church* is of Greek derivation (from *κυριακή*,) whereas *Ecclesia* was the prevalent term in Western Christendom. To make this last argument of any force it should be shown, that *Church* was exclusively a Celtic term, whereas it is unknown in Celtic, while it has existed from the earliest period in all the Teutonic<sup>13</sup> languages. But were it otherwise, such peculiarities would not prove independence from Rome. They might have come from the Church in Gaul, with which Britain would doubtless maintain great intercourse, and which retained a close connexion with Asia Minor. But as this circumstance had not rendered the Church of Lyons itself independent of the See of St. Peter, why should it confer any such immunity on Britain?

<sup>10</sup> In *Eccles. Ordinem*. Bib. Patr. 8, p. 720, 719, 715.

<sup>11</sup> Bede, ii. 1. Vid. also his statement in his letter to Egbert, that "the Bishop of York was designed to be a Metropolitan, receiving his pall from the Apostolic See."

<sup>12</sup> Bede, iii. 25.

<sup>13</sup> *Kirche* is certainly an ancient German word. Adelung says, "Dieses alte Wort kommt schon seit dem ersten Alter der Deutsche Sprache vor." He refers to Isidor and Notker; and to the Swiss, Low Saxon, Danish, Swedish, &c. forms of the word. But he does not derive *Kirche* (Church) from *κυριακή*, but supposes it to be a translation of *Ecclesia*, derived from *kören* or *kiesen*, to choose. And had the German word been of Greek origin, it might have been expected to come through Ulphilas; whereas he uses *Aikklesjo*. The word used in the Welsh versions is *Eghwys*. The more ancient term is *Llan. Kil*, in Irish, seems to come from *Cella*.



The dispute concerning Easter is the main one, which we hear of, when St. Augustin was sent to the Saxons by Gregory the Great. It is the only thing which Bede specifies, when he relates the first conference between St. Augustin and the British "Bishops or Doctors;" and when he says "they preferred their own traditions before all the Churches in the world, which in Christ agree among themselves." St. Augustin had "begun by brotherly admonitions to persuade them, that preserving Catholic unity with him, they should undertake the common labour of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. For they did not keep Easter Sunday at the proper time."<sup>14</sup> St. Gregory, and St. Augustin, have often been censured for their overbearing conduct to these British Bishops, whose authority they have been supposed desirous to supersede. It is curious, that while Gregory the Great is adduced on the one side as a witness against the Pope, because he objected to the term "Universal Bishop," he is blamed on the other for exercising that power, which he is asserted to have opposed. But it does not appear that either he or St. Augustin designed to abridge the privileges of the British clergy. The Popes have never asserted that their Primacy so superseded the Episcopate, as to give them any right to interfere with its functions, except for the redress of some fault, or when some emergency requires the interposition of the chief Bishop. St. Gregory's own words have already been cited: "If any fault is found in Bishops, I know not what Bishop is not subject to the Apostolical See. But when no fault requires, we are all equal on the principle of humility."<sup>15</sup> And on this system he acted towards the British. There is no reason for supposing that he would not have consented to their continuing, if they desired it, to constitute a separate Province. But they had been completely cut off from the rest of Christendom by the Saxon invasion, and, as we learn from Gildas, had fallen into the utmost immorality and ignorance. It was no tyrannical interference, then, on the part of the chief Bishop of Christendom, when he wrote to Augustin: "We commit to your brotherly care all the Bishops of Britain, that the unlearned may be

<sup>14</sup> Bede, ii. 2.<sup>15</sup> Epis. Lib. ix. 59.

taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, the perverse corrected by authority.”<sup>16</sup>

Neither does it appear from Bede’s account, that St. Augustin put forward any harsh claims to personal authority, at the second conference at which he met, “as is asserted, seven British Bishops, and many learned men;” if he called upon them to adopt the Roman customs, it was because they were the customs of “the Universal Church.”<sup>17</sup> The chief point in which he required conformity, was the observance of Easter, at the time which was usual throughout Christendom. This may seem a matter of little moment to modern readers; but to those whose life was governed by the laws of the Church, and moulded upon the divisions of the Christian year, it was of the utmost importance. Not only men’s private habits—the times of fasting and feasting, of mourning and rejoicing—but the public affairs of nations were influenced by the events which had befallen Our Lord. The Holy Week gave rest to the busy, and respite to the accused. Now, as the whole system of the year was regulated by the time of Easter, a difference in this particular would have been fatal to that unity of action which was the Church’s grand characteristic. So that it is not too much to say, that to refuse to keep Easter with the rest of Christendom, implied a refusal also of the other main request of St. Augustin: “that they would join with us to preach the word of God to the nation of the English.” And so the matter seems to have been found by all parties. One of the Bishops of the Scots,<sup>18</sup> says Laurentius, the successor of St. Augustin, “coming to us, not only refused to eat with us, but even to take his repast in the same house where we were entertained.”<sup>19</sup> They may, perhaps, have been feasting at that which his calculation made a solemn fast.

<sup>16</sup> Bede, i. 27.

<sup>17</sup> *Nostræ consuetudini, immo universalis ecclesiæ, contraria geritis.*—Bede, ii. 2.

<sup>18</sup> It was only the northern Scots who differed in their time of keeping Easter from the rest of Christendom. Those of Ireland conformed to the usual custom.—Bede iii. 3. In other points of less moment they seem to have done the same. The Roman mode of Tonsure is enjoined in one of St. Patrick’s Canons.—*Wilkins*, i. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Bede, ii. 4.

But it may be said, that it was as easy for St. Augustin and his associates to conform to the British rule, as for the British to conform to theirs. This is to forget that the time of Easter was not, as it had been before the Council of Nice, an open question. That Council had determined by the public authority of the whole Church, that it should be observed at one time in all countries. The Council had written a letter expressly forbidding any deviation. It was decided by the common judgment of all, that the sacred Paschal Feast should be observed on one and the self-same day.<sup>20</sup> St. Augustin, therefore, was not at liberty to deviate from the established custom, had he been inclined. And it must be added, that since the Anglo-Saxons held intercourse with the Gauls on one side, as well as with the Britons on the other; such a step would have created as much inconvenience as it would have removed.

St. Augustin, then, had good ground for his demand. But what ground had the Britons for their refusal? First, it should be observed, that their custom was not in reality that Quartodeciman usage, which has been alleged to indicate their Eastern origin. The ground of their peculiarity was, that, like the Scots, they had lost the true reckoning of the Vernal Equinox; "as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world."<sup>21</sup> They kept to the Cycle which had been introduced by Anatolius, A. D. 276, and had not availed themselves of the improvements, which had been introduced by Victorinus and Dionysius Exiguus, A. D. 527. As this is affirmed by Bede, in respect to the Scots, so it must have been the case with the Britons also; for Britain is enumerated in the letter of Constantine,<sup>22</sup> as one of the countries, which coincided with the rest of Christendom in its time of keeping Easter; and British Bishops joined in the decrees of the Council of Arles, which ordered that Easter should be everywhere observed at the same period, and that the time of its observance should be announced by the Pope.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Vita Constantini, iii. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Bede, iii. 4. Vid. also Prideaux's Connection, part ii. b. 4. vol. iii. p. 337.

<sup>22</sup> Vita Const. iii. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Harduin, i. 262.

The British Bishops, then, had no ancient tradition, or authority, on which to ground their maintenance of a custom, which divided them from the rest of the Church. Various modern writers have supposed that their opposition was directed against the Papal Supremacy, of which this particular demand was supposed to be a test. And a Welsh document is printed by Wilkins, in which they are represented to have replied, that they owed no obedience to the Pope. But this document, as Dr. Giles<sup>24</sup> observes, is obviously of modern date; and it does not appear from Bede that the Pope's authority was ever disputed between the parties.

That which Augustin demanded, and which was rejected by the British Bishops, was a compliance with the practice of the Universal Church. The ground which Bede assigns for their conduct was purely personal; that they were offended with Augustin for not rising up to meet them. It is probable enough that their separation from the rest of the world had involved some forgetfulness respecting the centre of ecclesiastical unity. Otherwise they could hardly have fallen into the inaccuracies, which their own predecessors at the Council of Arles had intended to obviate. They certainly did not receive Augustin, when he was sent to them by Gregory, as their fathers had received Germanus, when he was sent by Celestine. But it must be remembered, that though Gregory the Great received appeals from all Churches, yet that the Western Church did not as yet possess that complete organization, which subsequently existed. It was to prevent such diversities as separated the British Christians from their brethren, that a more methodized connection with the Roman See was afterwards introduced by our countryman, St. Boniface. It does not follow, therefore, that the Mission of St. Augustin would necessarily have upset their local system of government. The superiority, which he demanded, may have been little more than would naturally result from the ascendancy of a Bishop of greater acquirements, who was likely to become their channel of

<sup>24</sup> Bede, Hist. ii. 2. note.



communication with the rest of the world. And though Bede says that they would not "receive him as their Archbishop," he nowhere mentions that St. Augustin claimed any such title, or asserted that any Metropolitcal power had been bestowed upon him by the Pope. Had a question arisen respecting the authority of the Successor of St. Peter, it is strange that Bede, who speaks of Gregory as "bearing the Pontifical Primacy over the whole world," should have made no allusion to it. But this point is not said to have been raised. The Britons must, no doubt, have felt, that to join in missions and worship with St. Augustin, who was connected with the more powerful race, against which they were attempting to defend themselves, and was recognized in the capital of their ancient country, would endanger their national existence. The history of Bede is the only early account of these transactions, which can be trusted. But the chroniclers, who have been adduced, imply them to have been actuated by national<sup>25</sup> antipathy rather than by ecclesiastical jealousy. The intense hatred of the Anglo-Saxons, which had withheld them from making any attempt themselves for their conversion, disinclined them to co-operate in this work with others. And a refusal which was grounded on personal considerations is not to be set against those clear marks of relationship, which in previous times had bound the British Church to the Bishops of Rome.

2ndly. The considerations, which have been adduced, must be borne in mind, when we pass to the next subject—that such a separation between the Britons and the Church of Rome, if it had existed, would have been indefensible. For it was not founded upon any alleged contrariety between the rights of the Episcopate and those of the Primacy; it turned upon a specific and narrow ground, upon which the Church Universal had given a definite judgment. The

<sup>25</sup> This is suggested even by a passage, quoted by Bramhall, if indeed it be genuine. It represents the jealousy of the Britons as directed rather against the Anglo-Saxons, than against the Bishop of Rome. "*Se Caerleonensi Archiepiscopo obedire voluisse, Augustino autem Romano Legato omnino noluisse, nee Anglis inimicis, et paulo ante Paganis (a quibus suis sedibus pulsi erant) subesse se, qui semper Christiani fuerunt, voluisse.*"—*Just Vindication*, p. 102.



Council of Nice had decided, that to maintain unity of practice throughout the Body of Christ, it was essential that the great Christian Feasts should be celebrated everywhere on the same day. To this regulation the people of one small and remote province chose to oppose themselves. The Primates of Christendom, being charged with the maintenance of unity throughout the whole Body, were the fitting parties to remonstrate. "Pope Honorius," therefore, A. D. 634, "wrote to the Scots, earnestly exhorting them not to think their small number, placed in the utmost borders of the earth, wiser than all the ancient and modern Churches of Christ throughout the world; and not to celebrate a different Easter, contrary to the Paschal calculation, and the synodical decrees of all the Bishops upon earth."<sup>26</sup>

Now, whether they followed the Quartodeciman usage or not, their position would have been equally indefensible. If they did, as has been alleged by those who claim an Eastern origin for the British Church, they were condemned by the Second General Council (*Canon 7*) as heretics, who could only be received to communion on renouncing their error. For the Quartodeciman usage, like other approximations to Judaism, had been tolerated in the earliest age of the Church, but was afterwards forbidden on pain of excommunication. But if we take the other and truer view, and suppose the Britons to have been in error merely in their calculation of time, they were condemned by the Council of Nice, as the Quartodeciman usage by that of Constantinople. For its letter had required, that the practice of the general Body should be a law in this respect to individual provinces. So far, indeed, as their mistake arose only from those circumstances, which had cut them off from intercourse with the rest of the world, no kind of blame could attach to them. Bede speaks with the utmost veneration of several of the Scottish Bishops who adhered to the custom of their own country, not perceiving the relation, in which it placed them to the rest of the Church. Its tendency, however, was to break up the unity of Christ's

<sup>26</sup> Bede, ii. 19.

Body, and it was a direct violation of the rule of the most venerated of General Councils. And the British Bishops had the less reason to rebel against such a rule, since it had been specifically accepted by their own predecessors at Arles, who had concurred in referring the settlement of this point to the Roman Pontiff.

3rdly. The relation, then, of the early British Church to the Bishop of Rome does not indicate that it possessed any peculiar claim to independence; and so far as a difference existed, the British Bishops were clearly in the wrong. But supposing it otherwise, how does this affect the Church of England? The identity of a Church must depend either upon the continuity of the people of whom it is composed, or of the rulers by whom it is governed. In neither respects can the British Church be looked upon as identical with the Church of England. Our language shows how little Celtic blood has mixed itself with the Anglo-Saxon nation. And neither our temporal nor our spiritual rulers are the lineal descendants of those who presided over the Celtic race. It has been alleged, that the English Episcopate was derived not only from the Bishops who came from the Continent to convert the Anglo-Saxons, but likewise from Colman, and other Scottish Bishops, who have been supposed, therefore, to have transmitted the peculiar rights, of which they were said to be possessed. But the history of Bede shows this statement to be erroneous. The old succession from St. Augustin died out before the time of Theodore, and a new one was introduced by him, which derives its descent solely from Pope Vitalian, and the Bishops of Gaul. After the death of Archbishop Deusdedit, A. D. 664, Wini, Bishop of the West Saxons, is said by Bede to have been "the only Bishop in England, who was canonically ordained."<sup>27</sup> But Wini was not of Augustin's succession; he had been consecrated in Gaul.<sup>28</sup> Wilfred,<sup>29</sup> who came into England the year following, had also received consecration at Paris. When Theodore arrived, A. D. 669, he filled up the vacant Sees. Bisi was consecrated by him for the East Angles; his pre-

<sup>27</sup> Bede, iii. 28.<sup>28</sup> Id. iii. 7.<sup>29</sup> Id. iii. 28.

decessor Boniface<sup>30</sup> having died the year before; Leutherius he consecrated Bishop of the West Saxons, where there had long been a vacancy.<sup>31</sup> There would seem to have been a vacancy also in the Bishopric of the East Saxons, for Cedd<sup>32</sup> had died, A. D. 664, and Earconwald<sup>33</sup> was consecrated by Theodore, A. D. 674. And in consequence no Bishop of this See was present at the Council at Herutford<sup>34</sup> A. D. 673; and its affairs had been transacted by the Bishop of Mercia.<sup>35</sup> Putta, who appeared at this Council as Bishop of Rochester, had been consecrated either by Wilfred,<sup>36</sup> or Theodore. There remains no diocese except that of the Mercians, which was also vacant by the death of Jaruman, at the time of Theodore's arrival, since in that year Cead,<sup>37</sup> or St. Chad, was consecrated to it. Cead had been consecrated Bishop of York<sup>38</sup> by Wini and two British Bishops: but he resigned<sup>39</sup> his diocese and commission; and his former consecration, which was imperfect through irregularity, was perfected by Theodore.

This last circumstance would be sufficient to show, that Theodore was not likely to allow the Anglo-Saxon succession to be derived from those who differed from the rest of Christendom; even if the enumeration which has been given did not prove that its whole Episcopate took its commission from himself and the Bishops of Gaul. For he himself, with Wini and Wilfred, formed the whole channel through which it was continued. So that the English Church cannot be identified with the early British through its ecclesiastical rulers, any more than through its civil governors, or through the mass of its people. Indeed, if any peculiar claim of independence could be set up for the British Bishops, on what principle could it be transferred to the Suffragans of Canterbury? The British Bishops are said by recent writers to have claimed to be a separate Province, owing obedience to no

<sup>30</sup> Beda, iv. 5. That Boniface, Bishop of the East Angles, was dead when Theodore arrived appears, because Bishop Felix died, A. D. 646, [vid. Dr. Giles's note to Beda, iii. 20.] and the two following Bishops occupied twenty-two years between them.—*Beda*, iii. 20. iv. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Beda, iii. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Id. iii. 23.

<sup>33</sup> Id. iv. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Id. iv. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Id. iii. 30.

<sup>36</sup> Id. iv. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Id. iv. 3. with Dr. Giles's note.

<sup>38</sup> Id. iii. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Id. iv. 2.

one but the Bishops of Caerleon.<sup>40</sup> Even if this were true, by what counterchange have the privileges of Caerleon been transferred to Canterbury? The ecclesiastical right of the See of Canterbury was the commission bestowed upon it by Gregory the Great, and which has been inherited by its successive Archbishops. If this was an invasion of the rights of the Province of Caerleon, and if the first occupants can exclude all subsequent intruders, by what act has the original injustice been corrected? The Bishops who were in communion with the rest of Christendom, gradually excluded those who were not so, and occupied their ground. But how can it be affirmed that they are the same body, when the very principle of their combination implies them to be distinct?

4thly. There is one further difficulty in supposing that the Church of England was merely exercising a right, which she had inherited from the peculiar constitution of the early British Church. For this would imply, that the change made in the sixteenth century was the act of the Church of England herself, whereas it was the act of the civil power, to which she yielded an unwilling or a tame submission.

The separation between the Church of England and the rest of Christendom has been shown to depend upon that spiritual Headship, which is claimed by our Sovereign, whereby the Bishops of this Realm are constituted into a distinct Body, and determine all articles of faith, as though they were the whole Body of Christ. This power has been exercised by our Sovereigns ever since it was bestowed by Parliament upon Elizabeth, A.D. 1558; and every successive generation of those who have received ecclesiastical preferment, or have graduated at the Universities, has been required to give its separate sanction to that which was then done, by taking the oath of Supremacy; so that each individual commits himself to a personal rejection of the ancient maxims of Christ's Church, and takes his part for time and eternity with the adherents of Henry and Elizabeth. Now, whether the Church accepted this pledge voluntarily, must depend upon that which passed at its first adoption. So that

<sup>40</sup> It seems probable that this See had ceased to exist in St. Augustin's time.



we are led back to the first year of Elizabeth, when "spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction" was "united to the Crown."

Inasmuch, however, as the Act which was then passed was grounded upon a law of Henry VIII. we must first go back to that period, and see whether the oath of Supremacy, which was enacted by the 28 Henry VIII. 7, A.D. 1536, and which numbers of his subjects had been compelled to take two years before, was voluntarily accepted by the Church, or had been imposed upon her members without her sanction. For it has been maintained, that however compulsory may have been the steps which were taken in the first year of Elizabeth, they were justified by the full and free concurrence of the English Church, in the abolition of all Papal authority, A.D. 1534. In that year, Burnet tells us, "commissioners were sent everywhere to offer the oath of the succession to the Crown to all, according to the Act of Parliament, which was universally taken by all sorts of persons."<sup>41</sup> And documents<sup>42</sup> which remain show, that the form subscribed by the clergy, and by members of religious communities, whether men or women, contained an admission, that the King was Head of the Church, and a denial of the Pope's authority. And similar admissions were made, about the same time, by the Convocations, both of Canterbury and York, and by the Universities.

No doubt it must be allowed, that the Church of England was committed to that which was generally accepted by her members; just as it is impossible to deny her to be responsible for that interference of the Civil Power in her Legislative functions, and for that surrender of her judicial independence to the Crown, which have been practically submitted to during the last three centuries. But in considering how far the acts of 1534 excuse the irregularities of 1558, it makes considerable difference whether they were imposed by force, and still more whether they were disguised by fraud. And it will be found that they contained a large measure of both. When it is said that the Royal Supremacy was admitted and the Pope's power denied, it seems to be implied

<sup>41</sup> Hist. of Reformation. vol. i. p. 283. Ed. 1816.

<sup>42</sup> Id. vol. 1. Records, No. 50. vol. iii. book 2. No. 28.



that these steps were taken voluntarily, and indicate the unbiassed judgment of those who accepted them. But on the contrary, their rejection would have involved, not only the loss of property and liberty, under the charge of misprision of treason, (25 *Henry VIII.* 22,) but also a painful and ignominious death, (26 *Henry VIII.* 13.) That none could hope to escape such consequences was shown by the execution of Fisher and More, the next year, A.D. 1535. For the rejection of the King's Headship, and the admission of the Pope's authority, were held to be a denial of the right of succession to the Crown, and were the sole ground on which Fisher and More were put to death.

So much for the force, by which this admission was obtained. And the concessions made by the clergy, compared with the interpretation put upon them, show that there was not only cowardice on the one side, but fraud on the other. When the clergy found themselves at Henry's mercy, A.D. 1530, they consented, after expressing great repugnance, to acknowledge him Head of the Church, as the only means of saving their lives and property. But they insisted on putting in the saving clause, *quantum per Christi legem licet*, which in effect made the concession nugatory. This admission was made by the Convocation of Canterbury,<sup>43</sup> Jan. 24, 1530; and by that of York,<sup>44</sup> the least subservient of the two, May 6, 1531. But it was still in their power to retract; and, therefore, the King, A.D. 1532, required them to surrender their power of independent Legislation, and to engage to make no laws without his consent. No doubt this was to give practical effect to the admission of his Headship; for such a step finally cut them off from the rest of the Church Catholic, and rendered their Legislative authority dependent upon the concurrence of the new Head, by whom they were combined into an isolated body. They expressed, as they had previously done, the utmost repugnance; but when the King complained to the Commons, that "the clergy were but half his subjects;" they were alarmed and gave way.<sup>45</sup> And now, therefore, that

<sup>43</sup> Wilkins, iii. 742.

<sup>44</sup> Id. 745.

<sup>45</sup> Collier vindicates them from the accusation, and shows, by the acknowledgment of Lord Coke, that their submission in Spirituals to the Pope, had not interfered with their loyalty.—*Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 68, 69.

they were entirely helpless, an Act of Parliament was passed the very next year, A.D. 1533, in which it was stated, that the King "is supreme Head of the Church of England, as the Prelates and Clergy of your realm, representing the said Church in their Synods and Convocations, have recognized." (25 *Henry VIII.* 21. s. 2.) And again: The King is "the supreme Head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the Clergy of this Realm in their Convocations." (26 *Henry VIII.* 1.) So that they were affirmed to have made the admission unconditionally, when they had accompanied it by a condition, which rendered it virtually nugatory.

Much the same thing happened respecting the denial of the Pope's authority. It was debated in the Convocation of Canterbury, March 31, 1534, "whether the Roman Pontiff has any greater jurisdiction than any other foreign Bishop, conferred upon him by God in *Holy Scripture*."<sup>46</sup> Now, since Scripture says nothing in express words about any Bishop, it might be possible to deny this, without denying that the Pope was the Successor of St. Peter, and, therefore, was entitled to that authority, which Our Lord had bestowed upon the chief Apostle. It was only in this equivocal manner, however, that the Pope's authority was denied<sup>47</sup> either by Convocation, or by the Universities. But when the oath was imposed upon individuals, and when it was subsequently enacted by Parliament, A.D. 1536, all persons were required to deny the Pope's power in an absolute and unequivocal manner; and the decision of these learned bodies was referred to, as is shown by Sir Thomas More's trial, as though their acts had been explicit. The oath imposed in 1536 was, "he from henceforth shall utterly renounce, refuse, relinquish, or forsake the Bishop of Rome and his authority, power, and jurisdiction;" and that "he shall accept, repute, and take the King's Majesty to be the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England." (28 *Henry VIII.* 10. s. 5.) And when these words were subsequently changed to the statement, that "I do freely and clearly renounce, refuse,

<sup>46</sup> Wilkins, iii. 769.

<sup>47</sup> At York, May 5, vid. Collier, vol. ii. Records, No. 26. At Cambridge, May 2, Wilkins, iii. 771. At Oxford, June 27, Wilkins, iii. 775.

relinquish, and forsake that pretended authority, power, and jurisdiction both of the See and Bishop of Rome, and of all other foreign powers;" it was enacted, strangely enough, "that they which have already sworn the other aforesaid oaths, or any of them, shall take and esteem it of the same effect and force, as though they had sworn this." (35 *Henry VIII.* 1.)

Here, then, as in the admission of the King's Headship, the State had given a sense, which it hardly bore, to the Church's concession. In neither case had the Church's admission been either full or free: but the State had legislated as though it were both. The case resembled that of some of the *Libellatici* in the ancient Church, who did not actually sacrifice, but allowed it to be put on record that they had. A change took place; however, after the death of Henry and his son: their laws were reversed by 1 and 2 Philip and Mary; and Elizabeth had to renew that claim to Supremacy, which had been abandoned. The submission which the clergy render at present, dates from the first year of her reign, when the oath of Supremacy was for a second time imposed upon the Church of England. But it cannot be pretended that the Church at that time concurred in the demand which was made upon it. When the question came on in Parliament, the Bishops with one consent opposed the measure both by votes and speeches; and all of them but one subsequently refused the oath, and were deprived<sup>48</sup> by the Civil Power. The Lower House of Convocation opposed it likewise by a solemn protest, in which the two Universities concurred. They stated it as their belief, "that the chief power of feeding and ruling Christ's Church militant, and of strengthening his brethren, has been committed to the Apostle Peter, and to his legitimate Successors in the Apostolical See. Also, that the authority of treating and determining on those points, which refer to faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical discipline, has hitherto belonged and ought to belong to the Pastors of the Church, whom the Holy Spirit has set for this purpose in the Church, and not to the Laity."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Fourteen Bishops and three Bishops Elect.—*Collier*, ii. 431.

<sup>49</sup> Wilkins, iv. 180.

The assent, then, which the Church of England is alleged to have given to the claims of Henry VIII. had at best been uncertain and limited ; but its opposition to the same claim when revived by Elizabeth, was distinct and full. If its assent in the first case is supposed to have been important, much more was its dissent in the second. Against this, however, it is objected, first, that the acquiescence given in the reign of Henry VIII. had never been canonically rescinded, and, therefore, was still in force, independently of any fresh enactment : secondly, that the Bishops, who were found in possession by Elizabeth, had been uncanonically obtruded in the reign of Mary, and had no right to represent the Church. These objections, however, are not borne out by history. When Convocation met in the second year of Queen Mary, the Lower House, perceiving that the Upper desired to restore " this noble Church of England to her pristine state, and unity of Christ's Church,"<sup>50</sup> petitioned " that the ancient liberty, authority, and jurisdiction be restored to the Church of England according to the article of the great Charte, called Magna Charta, at the least in such sort, as it was in the first year of Henry VIII." " Item : that the statute of the submission of the clergy, made anno 25 Henry VIII. and all other statutes made during the time of the late schism, in derogation of the liberties and jurisdictions of the Church, from the first year of King Henry VIII. may be repealed, and the Church restored ' in integrum.' "<sup>51</sup>

There is no reason to suppose that this application was extorted by fear ; for it was made at least a year before the first of those acts of cruelty, which afterwards so alienated the nation. The reference to the Great Charter may have been suggested by the words of Sir Thomas More, at his trial, who spoke of the oath of Supremacy as " contrary to the laws and statutes of the Kingdom, yet unrepealed, as might evidently be seen by *Magna Charta*, wherein are these words : *Ecclesia Anglicana libera sit, et habeat omnia jura integra, et libertates suas illesas.*" But it was for the State to carry out the desire which the clergy had expressed, since

<sup>50</sup> Wilkins, iv. 95.

<sup>51</sup> Id. p. 96.



the separation from Rome had been brought about by Acts of Parliament. When these were rescinded by 1 and 2 Philip and Mary, 8. A. D. 1554, the clergy of both Provinces appeared before Cardinal Pole, February 10, 1556, and accepted certain "Legatine Constitutions." And the second of these provided that "the decrees of all Councils, general or provincial, which were received by the See of Rome, the constitutions of the Roman Pontiffs, and the laws of the Church, which were formerly promulged in this kingdom, should be restored to their former state."<sup>52</sup>

Whatever assent may have been given to the demands of Henry was, therefore, canonically withdrawn by the proper authority. But it is said that the Bishops who assented to these acts, and who afterwards protested against the Supremacy of Elizabeth, had been uncanonically admitted. For their predecessors had been deprived by the Royal authority, and they had been consecrated by Suffragan Bishops, and not by the Metropolitans of Canterbury and York. In considering whether the steps thus taken were lawful, we may proceed either according to the general laws of the Church Catholic, or the particular laws of the Church of England. According to the first it was shown (*cap.* iv. p. 72,) that the authority of a Bishop depends on his representing the whole Episcopate, and, therefore, on his union with the rest of his brethren. There was no reason, therefore, why the Sovereign should respect the authority of those, whose very claim to authority depended on their renouncing the communion of their brethren. For every one of those who were thus removed, had qualified himself for office by taking the oath of Supremacy, in which the authority of the rest of the Episcopate was denied. Several of them, moreover, were displaced for marrying after their ordination: an act, which, besides that it was contrary to their vows, was a legitimate ground for deprivation according to the Canons of the ancient Church Catholic,<sup>53</sup> from which the Church of England had professed not to vary. So that though the persons whom Mary ejected

<sup>52</sup> Wilkins, iv. 121, 132. Burnet's Reform. p. ii. b. ii. p. 588.

<sup>53</sup> Vid. the 1st. Canon of Neo-Cesarea, which had been sanctioned by the first Canon of Chalcedon.



from their Sees, may have been really Bishops, she was not bound to recognize their commission according to the laws of the Church Catholic. And in removing them she had the sanction of the successor of St. Peter, so that she was exactly following that course, which St. Cyprian<sup>54</sup> prescribed to the people of Arles. Marcian of Arles, like Cranmer and Holgate, was a Metropolitan; and St. Stephen's ground for depriving him was not stronger than that which might be alleged against persons who had violated a Canon, which was sanctioned by the Council of Chalcedon.

Again: If we go by the rules of English Church-law, rather than by those of the Church Catholic, the vindication of Mary's measures is not less complete. The English law gave Queen Mary "full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner, spiritual authority, or jurisdiction, ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed, corrected, restrained, or amended." (26 *Henry VIII.* 1.) And the manner in which this power was to be exercised in regard to Bishops, was pointed out by the commissions which had been granted by Edward VI. not only to the Bishops whom he had nominated, but to the Primate also. These commissions have been spoken of, as though they concerned no one but the individual Bishops who accepted them. No doubt these Bishops were more immediately concerned in them, for they were tantamount to a promise that they would resign their offices whenever they were called upon by the Crown. And in consequence, probably, the Bishops who were removed seem to have made no sort of opposition. But considering that these commissions were issued to the members of the Upper House of Convocation, including the Primates, and that no objection was taken to them by the Lower House, which met and adopted certain petitions some months after Cranmer's new commission had been issued, it is impossible to deny them to have received an implicit sanction from the Church.

<sup>54</sup> Vid. *supra*. p. 157.

Now, the commission granted to Cranmer begins by stating, that "all jurisdiction of any kind, whether ecclesiastical or secular, flows from the Royal Power, as from its Supreme Head." It then proceeds to give him authority to "ordain," "institute," "invest," and "deprive;" but concludes, "we license you by this present instrument, which is to be of force only during our pleasure."<sup>55</sup> It throws light on the meaning of this commission, that in the same year, A.D. 1547, an Act of Parliament was passed, which stated that the elections to Bishoprics "be in very deed no elections, but only by a writ of *congé d'elire*, have colours, shadows, or pretences of elections, serving, nevertheless, to no purpose, and seeming also derogatory and prejudicial to the King's Prerogative Royal." With these acts of the State, and these admissions of the Church before her, Mary was surely borne out in considering that it was for her, through her commissioners, to judge whether those who claimed the Episcopal title, when she came to the throne, had more right to it, according to the law of England, than they had according to the laws of the Church Catholic. Those who dislike her principles may say that she acted harshly and arbitrarily in issuing a commission to deprive them, but it appears impossible to dispute that she exercised a power which was given her by law, and, therefore, that her acts were valid. Indeed, she only exercised the same power which was exerted by the two next Sovereigns, when they suspended Grindal and Abbott. Such authority, must, no doubt, belong to the Crown; for it has been invested with "such jurisdiction as by any spiritual or ecclesiastical power or authority hath heretofore been, or may lawfully be exercised, for the visitation of the ecclesiastical state and persons;" and it does not appear either that the Primates are irresponsible, or that any other power exists to which they are subordinate.

The deposition of Bishops, then, by Queen Mary, was not at variance with the rules of the Church of England, any more than with those of the Church Catholic. Nor yet was the appointment of their successors invalid, because not

<sup>55</sup> Wilkins, iv. 2.

sanctioned by the two Metropolitans, Cranmer and Holgate. For these were the very parties whose authority was annulled by their separation from the rest of the Church, and by their violation of its Canons. And the English law contained a special provision, by which the concurrence of the Metropolitan in the appointment of his Suffragans, was rendered unnecessary. For it was provided (25 *Henry VIII.* 20, s. 5,) that the King should "signify the said election to one Archbishop and two other Bishops, or else to four Bishops within this realm," commanding them "to confirm the said election, and to invest and consecrate the said person." And to this provision every ecclesiastic in Queen Mary's reign had bound himself by oath, for they had all sworn (35 *Henry VIII.* 1,) to "observe, keep, maintain, and defend all the King's Majesty's styles, titles, and rights, with the whole effects and contents of the acts provided for the same, and all other acts made, or to be made, within this Realm, in and for that purpose."

The Bishops who were consecrated in Queen Mary's days, then, were not intruders, and the opposition which they made to the revival of the oath of Supremacy by Elizabeth, was a legitimate expression of the mind of the Church of England. It had yielded an uncertain and forced consent to the claim of Supremacy when it was made by Henry VIII.; its denial of it in the first year of Elizabeth was distinct and consistent. It is probable that the change arose from the clearer insight which men had gained into the real nature of the claim, for the very persons (such as Tunstall, of Durham,) who had yielded in the first instance, now braved deprivation rather than repeat their submission. And this formal opposition which the Church of England offered to her separation from the rest of the Church Catholic, is in exact agreement with two circumstances of contemporary history. 1st. The movement against the Royal Supremacy appears to have proceeded from the clergy, because it arose when the representatives of the clergy were allowed to act; while the enactment of the Supremacy was accompanied by the imposition of restraints upon Convocation. 2ndly. Of all the Formularies of Faith, whether doctrinal or devotional, which were put forward

during the ascendancy of the Tudors, none can be shown to have had the sanction of Convocation, except the Thirty-nine Articles; and that only in a single Province, and after its members had been purged by the deprivation of all opponents.

The Act for "the submission of the clergy," (25 *Henry VIII.* 19,) renders it probable that they were expected to retract their admission of the Supremacy, if they had opportunity to do so. And during the rest of Henry's reign, no party in the nation was allowed sufficient liberty to exhibit its unbiassed inclination. But when Edward succeeded, and men breathed again in consequence of the repeal of the persecuting acts of his Father, (by 1 *Edw.* VI. 12,) there seems to have been no disposition to allow Convocation to act freely. "The Popish party was so prevalent in both houses," says Burnet, "that Cranmer had no hope of doing anything, till they were freed of the trouble, which some of the great Bishops gave them."<sup>56</sup> This was in 1547, when they showed their jealousy by the demand, "that all such statutes and ordinances, as shall be made concerning all matters of religion, and causes ecclesiastical, may not pass without the sight and assent of the said clergy."<sup>57</sup> Nothing was obtained from them, in favour of the reforming party, except their sanction to the marriage of the clergy, and the allowance of communion in both kinds.<sup>58</sup> And though the most important changes were afterwards made, no mention occurs of their co-operation: they met, as it seems, merely to be adjourned, and their wish to be consulted in everything which was adopted, does not appear to have been attended to during this reign.

Compare this with that which passed under Queen Mary. Convocation<sup>59</sup> was summoned by a writ addressed to Cranmer, Aug. 4, 1553, and immediately proceeded to business, discussing the question of the Real Presence, and the Catechism, which had been prepared, probably, by Nowell. It is easy to say that the parties elected did not truly represent the clergy, but the assertion has not a shadow of proof; and as Cranmer was not sent to the Tower till September 14th, he had it in

<sup>56</sup> Hist. of Reform, p. ii. b. i. p. 87.

<sup>57</sup> Wilkins, iv. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Id. p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Wilkins, iv. 88.



his power to prevent any unfairness in the elections. It is obvious, however, that the majority was entirely adverse to him. Peter Martyr writes to Bullinger, December 15th of the same year: "The opponents of Transubstantiation could do no good, inasmuch as they were overwhelmed by numbers." And he goes on to deduce such conclusions as show a consciousness that the mass of the clergy were against his party. "These things indicate to us what may be expected from the Convocations of the Bishops; for either good men are not admitted, or should they be summoned inadvertently, they are of no avail, since they are overpowered by a crowd of unlearned and ungodly men: whence our modern Bishops, and the [Fathers and Councils of our own times, lead us to regard the ancient Councils with suspicion, so that we rightly withhold our confidence in them, without the authority of the word."<sup>60</sup>

This is evidently the testimony of a person who was against the Church, because it was against him; and who considered his private interpretation of Scripture to be more trustworthy than that of the collective body of Christ. Indeed, the selection of the doctrine of the Real Presence, as the point which was to be publicly disputed in Convocation, showed an intention to appeal to the popular feeling, and an expectation of carrying things by argument. For this was the particular, in which the ancient system retained its strongest hold both upon clergy and people: the Zuinglian theory seems to have been slow in destroying their faith in the Incarnation and Real Presence of Our Lord: Hooper<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Original Letters, &c. (Parker Soc.) No. 238, p. 508.

<sup>61</sup> Though it is administered in both kinds, yet in some places the supper is celebrated three times a day. Where they used heretofore to celebrate in the morning the *mass* of the Apostles, they now have the *communion* of the Apostles; where they had the *mass* of the blessed Virgin, they now have the communion, which they call the *communion* of the Virgin; where they had the principal, or high mass, they now have, as they call it, the high communion. They still retain their vestments and the candles before the altars; in the Churches they always chant the *hours*, and other hymns relating to the Lord's Supper, but in our own language. And that Popery may not be lost, the mass-priests, although they are compelled to discontinue the use of the Latin language, yet most carefully observe the same tone and manner of chanting to which they were heretofore accustomed in the Papacy.—*Letter to Bullinger, Dec. 27, 1549. Id. No. 26, p. 72. Vid. also the Council's Letter to Bonner, June 24, 1549. Wilkins, iv. 34.*



complained that the clergy did their best to keep up the old belief, even when they were compelled to use Edward's Prayer Book; and Burnet says that even in Elizabeth's days "the greater part of the nation continued to believe" "the corporal presence."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Hist. of Reform. p. ii. b. iii. p. 704. By way of illustration I introduce the following extract from a letter which appeared in the *Evening Journal*, and which was understood to be written by a person of great local knowledge:—"Lutheranism was, I think, introduced into Norway in quite a different way from what it was elsewhere. In other countries it was at first an *ecclesia militans*, having to struggle desperately with Catholicism, or rather with Popery, obtaining more and more influence, and its regular introduction being thus regularly prepared. In Norway no such thing took place. The people were thoroughly Catholic. Some Lutheranism was, as I understand, preached a little at Bergen by a powerful German preacher, but he did not make many proselytes. The people were fond of their religion and of the priests, who certainly, as far as we can judge from the scanty evidences left, were a more worthy set of people than in most other countries at that time. Even the same *magister* Geble, first Lutheran bishop in 1537, wrote, whilst archdeacon, in a letter, dated April 14, 1531—only six years, therefore, before his changing—about 'the heresy which, God better it, has now all too much spread'—that is to say, in Europe, speaking of certain meetings to be held then on the subject by the sovereigns. Thus our people were not at all prepared for such an event, when it came like a thunder-clap. Norway, being only personally, not politically, united to Denmark through the Sovereign, by the union of Calmar, had, like Sweden, struggled to maintain its independence of Denmark, or rather of the Danish aristocracy, then lording it here. Sweden had an aristocracy of its own, that could counterbalance the Danish, and many of them had patriotism enough to side with the people. This saved Sweden. Norway had no aristocracy except its clergy. The old aristocracy had already been humbled and beaten down by the last independent kings. For a long while the struggle against the Danish influence was only, and faintly, kept up by the clergy, whose ranks even were not seldom opened to Danish prelates, forced in amongst them on purpose. Through marriages and other clever management, most of the family estates were brought into the hands of Danish noblemen. The last effort of the Norwegian patriots was to embrace the cause of the old legitimate king, Christian II. in opposition to his uncle Frederick I. who had usurped the throne, but was supported by the Danish aristocracy, in whose hands he was a mere tool. But Christian II. was enticed to visit his rival, and betrayed. His standard (although himself a prisoner) being afterwards raised by the Danish middle and lower classes, the aristocracy, headed by Christian III. the son of Frederick I. and like him their tool, resolved to put an end to all such movements, and to avail themselves of the opportunity to grasp the power completely. They, therefore, embraced the Reformation, which afforded them the means not only of humbling their rivals the clergy, but also of dividing the rich spoil of their secularized possessions; and when this work was completed in Denmark, the turn came to Norway. The Norwegian clergy was not only the main strength of patriotism, but it was also immensely rich. There were thus two reasons to prompt its doom. Norway was to be made a province of Denmark, a domain of the Danish nobility. The most effectual

Again : Nothing shows more clearly that the changes made by the Tudor Sovereigns did not carry with them the concurrence of the Clergy, than the irregular manner in which the Book of Common Prayer was imposed upon the nation. It was originally put forth in 1548-9, and subsequently altered in 1552 and 1559. It has never been alleged that Convocation was consulted on either of the two latter occasions,<sup>63</sup> but those who wish to maintain the Catholic character of the Church of England, have laboured hard to show that at its original introduction the Prayer Book was not destitute of Synodical authority. Their arguments rest entirely upon two statements—a letter of the Council to Bonner, A.D. 1549—and an assertion of Abbott (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury,) in his answer to Hill, A.D. 1604. If these statements were ever so positive, they could hardly be accepted as standing instead of the formal acts of a public body, which ought unquestionably to be attested in a Synodical manner. But they are so loose and vague as to prove nothing. The records of Convocation show that Communion under both kinds was authorized, and that it was contemplated that there should be a new Form<sup>64</sup> of Worship ; but what evidence is there that Convocation compiled such a Form, or sanctioned it after its compilation ? However imperfect the Records may have been, this main point could not have been wholly omitted : and if the slightest mention of it had remained, it would not have been overlooked by Heylin, who wrote

way of doing this was by introducing the Reformation. And accordingly the Reformation was introduced by brute force, sword in hand, the people being taken partly by surprise, partly by the most wily traps ; and a province of Denmark it was made. You may easily conceive with what feelings the Norwegian people received these alterations. The common people, knowing nothing of Lutheranism, and being quite unprepared for it, despised the new priests ; they killed them even in several places. There were churches empty for generations, barbarism and ignorance became widely spread, and only a long, a very long, time afterwards some order was introduced. And at this hour many Catholic reminiscences are still kept up, Catholic faith and predilections having never been entirely eradicated.”—*Christiana*, Feb. 1852.

<sup>63</sup> “Convocation,” says Dr. Cardwell, “was not permitted to pass its judgment on the second Service Book put forth by authority of Parliament in the reign of King Edward VI. and for this plain reason, that it would have thrown all possible difficulties in the way of its publication.”—*Pref. to Synodalia*, x.

<sup>64</sup> Wilkins, iv. 15, 16.

before they were destroyed by the fire of London. Now, the Council and Abbott do not in reality say more, than that Convocation assented to the setting forth some new Form : whereas, the thing which requires to be proved is, that they assented to the particular Form which was set forth. The Council uses the most vague and indeterminate language:<sup>65</sup> and nothing can be made of Abbott's statement, (even if he were correct in his allusion to that which happened above fifty years before.) "The more material points," he says, "were disputed and debated in the Convocation-House by men of both parties : and might further have been discussed, so long as any Popish divine had aught reasonably to say." And so, he says, "the religion which was then and is now established. . . . when it had been collected into the Book of Common Prayer. . . . was afterwards confirmed by the Upper and Lower Houses."<sup>66</sup> What is wanted is some proof that the Form of Prayer was examined and approved ; and not that there was such an indefinite assertion of acquiescence in the new system, as the silence of Convocation might be taken to supply.

If we turn from these vague statements to Edward's Act of Uniformity, it becomes apparent that no Synodical sanction could be alleged for his Prayer Book. When the Liturgy was revised in 1661, the Act mentions that "the Presidents, Bishops, and Clergy of both Provinces, have reviewed the said Books." But how different was the language of Edward's Parliament ! "His Highness . . . hath appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury, and certain of the most learned and discreet Bishops, and other learned men of this realm, to . . . make one convenient and meet order, rite, and fashion of common and open prayer . . . which . . . is of them concluded, set forth, and delivered to His Highness to his comfort and quietness of mind." (2, 3 *Edw.* VI. 1.) Had there been any ground for alleging the concurrence of Convocation, it would not have been omitted ; for this was a circumstance of which Parliament knew how to make the most. Henry's Parliament (25 *Henry VIII.* 2) speaks of

<sup>65</sup> Wilkins, iv. 35.

<sup>66</sup> Strype Eccl. Mem. vol. ii. p. i. b. i. c. ii. p. 137.

the King's title as acknowledged by "the Prelates and clergy of your realm, representing the said Church, in their Synods and Convocations;" whereas neither of Edward's Acts of Uniformity contain any reference to the consent of Convocation. The contrast becomes evident when the events of these two reigns are referred to in 8 Eliz. 1. s. 2. It is said that Henry's Title was admitted, "as well by all the Clergy then of this realm in their several Convocations, as also by the Lords . . . and Commons:" "and that also the said late King Edward the Sixth in his time, by authority of Parliament, caused a godly and virtuous book, entituled, the Book of Common Prayer . . . to be made and set forth."

The notices, which are supplied by Heylin and Strype, lead to the same conclusion. Strype gives the history of the Communion Office, which was put out early in 1547, as preparatory to the First Prayer Book. For this purpose, "the King appointed certain grave and learned Bishops, and others, to assemble at Windsor Castle, there to treat and confer together; and to conclude and set forth one perfect and uniform order of communion." "Of this commission were most of the Bishops, and several others of the most learned divines in the nation."<sup>67</sup> It is clear that this, then, was purely a Royal Commission, which was wholly unconnected with Convocation. Convocation can never be shown to have met at Windsor; nor is it recorded to have given any sanction to these divines, either previous or subsequent. Yet this was the Committee by which King Edward's First Book was drawn up, for as Strype tells us, in the following winter, 1547, it was "appointed to examine all the Offices of the Church, and to consider where they needed reformation, and accordingly to reform them."<sup>68</sup> But that which sets the matter beyond dispute is the testimony of Heylin, who wrote while the Records of Convocation existed, and while tradition was comparatively fresh; and whose principles inclined him to make every effort to vindicate the Church of England in this main particular. He evidently felt the difficulty, to which he alludes in no less than three of his works. "It is objected,"

<sup>67</sup> Strype's *Cranmer*, vol. i. b. ii. c. iv. p. 224, 226. Oxf. 1812.

<sup>68</sup> *Id.* The same account is given by Fox.



he says, respecting this First Prayer Book, "that neither the undertaking was advised, nor the book itself approved, in a Synodical way by the Bishops and Clergy; but that it was the act only of some few of the Prelates, employed therein by the King, or the Lord Protector, without the privity and approbation of the rest."<sup>69</sup> He refers for an answer to his *Life of Laud*, where, however, he does not deny, but excuse the fact. The case of the Scotch Liturgy, he says, "seems to be much like that of King Edward VI. when the first Liturgy was composed by some few of the Bishops, and other learned men (not above thirteen in number) especially there-to authorized; or unto that of Queen Elizabeth, when the second Liturgy of that King was fitted and corrected by her appointment. Neither of which durst trust their clergy, but acted sovereignly therein of their own authority, not venturing either of the said books to their Convocations, but only giving them the strength of an Act of Parliament."<sup>70</sup> For this he finds palliations in the assertion, that the Liturgy did not teach any new doctrine; and that one of the Articles, which he supposes were sanctioned by Convocation, approves of Service in the English Language. But his main argument is one which is conclusive against any attempts to justify the Reformation on the principles of the ancient Church: he says, that to accept the King's Supremacy, as the Clergy had done, was, "in effect, to devolve on him all that power, which formerly they enjoyed in their own capacity."<sup>71</sup>

There seems, at first sight, more plausibility in the assertion, that the Forty-two Articles of 1552 were sanctioned by Convocation. For though there is no record that any sanction was given to them, yet such a conclusion has been deduced from their title. Heylin, who does his best to vindicate their authority, supposes "that the Convocation had devolved their power on some grand Committee, sufficiently authorized to debate, conclude, and publish what they had concluded in the name of the rest." For it is not said, as in the Articles published in Queen Elizabeth's time, A. D. 1562,

<sup>69</sup> *Hist. of the Reform.* 3rd. Ed. p. 67.

<sup>70</sup> *Life of Laud*, p. ii. l. 4. A. D. 1636, p. 326.

<sup>71</sup> Heylin's *Tracts*, p. 40.



"That they were agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy, in the Convocation holden at London; but that they were agreed upon in the Synod of London by the Bishops, and certain other learned men; which seems to make it plain enough, that the debating and concluding of the Articles contained in the said book, was the work only of some Bishops, and certain other learned men, sufficiently empowered to that end and purpose."<sup>72</sup>

But this defence turns entirely upon the fact, that such authority had been devolved by Convocation upon a Committee of Divines. A commission like this ought surely to be definite and unequivocal; but not only can no such Committee be proved to have been authorized, but the only Committee which is known to have laid claim to such a commission, can be proved not to have been authorized by Convocation. Indeed, had Convocation been willing to accept the Forty-two Articles, there seems no reason why it should have objected to sanction Edward's Second Prayer Book, to which it is generally allowed to have been opposed. Now not only were Articles put forth, as "agreed upon by Bishops and learned men in the Synod of London," but a Catechism also, "bearing the name of this honourable Synod."<sup>73</sup> This was complained of by Weston, the Prolocutor of Convocation, in the first year of Queen Mary; and the majority of members subscribed their names to a statement, "that it was not of that House's agreement set forth." To whom Philpot replied, "That he thought they were deceived in the title of the Catechism, in that it beareth the title of the Synod of London last before this, although many of them, which then were present, were never made privy thereof in setting it forth; for that this House had granted the authority to make Ecclesiastical Laws unto certain persons to be appointed by the King's Majesty; and whatsoever Ecclesiastical Laws they or the most part of them did set forth, according to a statute on that behalf provided, it might be well said to be done in the Synod of London, although

<sup>72</sup> Hist. of Reform. p. 121.

<sup>73</sup> Fox's Martyrs, vol. iii. p. 16.

such as be of this House now, had no notice thereof before the promulgation.”<sup>74</sup>

The fairness of this proceeding depends, then, upon the nature of the sanction, which Convocation is alleged to have given. But its Records show, that its concurrence in the revision of the Ecclesiastical Laws did not imply any transfer of its authority in putting forth doctrinal Formularies. The Lower House petitioned<sup>75</sup> “that it be provided, that the Ecclesiastical Laws be examined and promulged, according to the Act of Parliament, 35 Henry VIII. c. 19.” And even the Act of Parliament, on which the real power of the Commissioners was dependent, was far from giving them that unlimited right of putting out doctrinal Formularies, which is pretended. The Act (continued by 3, 4 *Edw.* VI. 11,) provided that “such Laws Ecclesiastical, so compiled, gathered, and ordered by the said thirty persons, or the more number of them . . . . shall be taken for the King’s Ecclesiastical Laws of this realm.” It was a gross unfairness to represent either Parliament or Convocation as responsible for all the publications which might emanate from such a body. The pretension shows how unscrupulous an use was made of the name of Convocation; and the reason given for it explains apparently on what principle Articles, respecting which nothing could be said but that they were agreed upon by “Bishops and certain other learned men,” were yet connected with the Synod of London. When Weston objected that “there be fifty, which witnessing that they were of the number of that Convocation, never heard of that Catechism,” Cranmer could only reply: “I was ignorant of the setting to of that title; and as soon as I had knowledge thereof, I did not like it: therefore, when I complained thereof to the Council, it was answered me by them, that the Book was so entitled, because it was set forth in the time of the Convocation.”<sup>76</sup>

There is no evidence, then, that either the Prayer Book or the Articles were sanctioned by the Church’s representatives, when they were originally put forth in the time of Edward:

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> Wilkins, iv. 15.

<sup>76</sup> Disputation with Chedsey, Jenkyn’s Cranmer, iv. 65.

on the contrary, there is good reason for supposing that they were not. It was the same when the Prayer Book was again introduced in the first year of Elizabeth. And even the Thirty-nine Articles, though not submitted to Convocation till it had been purged of opponents by the removal of those who scrupled to take the oath of Supremacy, were not sanctioned by the clergy of both provinces, as their title would seem to indicate, but only by the clergy of the Southern Province, and the Bishops of both. The clergy of the Northern Province, having met like their brethren, Jan. 12th, 1562, were immediately adjourned to Feb. 5th,<sup>77</sup> before which time everything appears to have been decided. The reason may, perhaps, have been, that the deprivations had fallen principally upon the dignitaries and the Cathedral clergy, who constitute the majority of the Southern Convocation, so that the deputies of the Parochial clergy, who form the majority in the Northern Province, were less to be depended upon. And it is observable, that the Northern Convocation had stood out longer against the admission of Henry's Supremacy, than their southern brethren.

It cannot be affirmed, then, that the separation of the Church in England from that of the rest of Christendom, was her own voluntary act; or that it was brought about by the free action of her spiritual rulers. It was effected by the strong arm of the Civil Power, aided by the efforts of a party, which desired entire emancipation from the bonds of spiritual authority; and accelerated by the existence of those abuses, which the Church's worldly prosperity, and the rudeness and ignorance of the times, had engendered. But had it been otherwise, it would have been untrue to allege either that the position of the early British Church justified the Church of England in severing herself from the rest of Christendom, or that she had any peculiar claim to the heritage of her Celtic predecessor. But in truth she did not sever herself from the rest of the world: she yielded but an enforced and equivocal assent to the demands of Henry; and the Supremacy of Elizabeth was imposed by the State in opposition to her solemn protest. So that every one who assents to that

<sup>77</sup> Wilkins, iv. 243.

claim, by binding himself to the like submission, must take this step on his own individual judgment; and is opposing the recorded conviction of the English Clergy, as well as the belief of collective Christendom.

So much respecting the authority of the ancient British Church: that of the Greek Church may be dismissed more speedily. For however effective may be its testimony against the Church of Rome, its witness on behalf of the Church of England amounts to nothing. So that though it may be an useful weapon for those who deny that any such thing exists as Church-authority; it cannot be relied upon by those who desire to construct any system of belief, or hope to see any positive opinions prevail among mankind. Such seems the natural result of the three following considerations. 1st. The main doctrinal opposition between the Greek Church and the Church of Rome respects the Procession of the Holy Ghost. Now, on this point the Church of England is committed to the self-same principles as the Church of Rome. For she retains the same Creed which she received while yet in communion with the residue of the West. The symbol of St. Athanasius binds her as much as it ever did; and separates England from Greece, no less effectually than it separates Rome. This is one of those parts of our faith, which was received originally on the authority of the Apostolic See, and which is retained in our separation from it. If Catholicity, then, means communion with the residue of the Church, how are we benefitted by the separation of Rome from Greece, since the Church of England can communicate with neither?

2ndly. As the Church of England is opposed to Greece in that particular in which Greece is most opposed to Rome, so in all those points of doctrine in which she is opposed to Rome, she is equally opposed to Greece. For there is hardly a tenet in which she has departed from the popular Creed of the Western Church, in which the Eastern Church would not condemn her. How can we profess to be in communion, then, with the Eastern Church, when the Easterns agree with Rome respecting those very doctrines, which the Church of England has been disputing for the last three centuries?



3rdly. There is a Bishop resident in the East, who is called "the Bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland in Jerusalem." The Queen has been "graciously pleased to assign Syria, Chaldaea, Egypt, and Abyssinia, as the limit within which the said Bishop may exercise spiritual jurisdiction." "His spiritual jurisdiction" extends "over the English clergy and congregations, and over those who may join his Church, and place themselves under his Episcopal authority."<sup>78</sup> This Bishop has received various deserters from the Greek Church, and formed them into what he calls Protestant congregations. And when some clergymen in England complained of this act, the four Metropolitans of England and Ireland put forward a statement, in which they justified the Bishop, or at least expressed no dissatisfaction at his conduct. Neither have any of their Suffragans protested against such acts either in them or him; nor have they been objected to by Convocation. How, then, can it be said that the Church of England is in communion with the Church of Greece, any more than with that of Rome? So that whatever use may be made of the Greek Church as a weapon against our opponents, it is useless for the purpose of justifying ourselves. Those who believe that God has His Church in the world, and that its purpose is to teach truth, will not be satisfied with arguments which are simply destructive, and which result only in the overthrow of all authority.

<sup>78</sup> Stephens's Statutes, p. 2151.



## CHAPTER XV.

## RESULTS OF THE ANGLICAN SYSTEM OF CHURCH-AUTHORITY.

OF the results of the Anglican system of Church-authority I shall say little, because it is painful to bring an accusation against the system in which I have been brought up, and in which I had hoped to die. But it is impossible not to notice shortly the effect of that separation from the rest of Christendom, which the acceptance of the Royal Supremacy involved. I will first observe, how completely the Church of England has taken her character from the three Dynasties, under which it has been her fortune to live; and then notice the effect of her present position upon the question of Church-authority.

Since England was separated from the Successor of St. Peter, the throne has been occupied successively by the Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian Families. The first asserted absolute authority for themselves; the second recognized the Church as a Divine institution, yet on the condition that it must receive its commission through the Sovereign, whose right was also of Divine origin; the third has allowed the principles of pure Private Judgment to predominate. These, therefore, have been the systems, which have severally prevailed in the Church of England, which, on the whole, has always reflected the principles of the reigning power; and the last of them has the ascendancy at the present moment.

The circumstances mentioned in the last chapter show the absolute power, which was claimed and exercised by the

Tudors. Elizabeth, as well as Edward, imposed Articles, and enacted Canons by her own power. She is known to have made important additions to the Thirty-nine Articles, after they had been agreed upon by the clergy; and in her "Injunctions" she claimed the same power, which had been possessed by her father and brother. To say, as her "Injunctions"<sup>1</sup> proceed to do, that this was no more than the ancient Supremacy, which had originally belonged to the Crown, is an untenable assertion; for what English Sovereign before Henry VIII. had taken upon him to excommunicate, or to decide questions of doctrine on appeal, or to set forth Articles of Faith? The estimate at that time formed of the Royal Supremacy is attested by the declaration of the Twelve Judges, shortly after Elizabeth's death, that "the King, without Parliament, might make orders and constitutions for the government of the clergy, and might deprive them, if they obeyed not."<sup>2</sup> "So that independently of the powers acknowledged in the statute, there was yet in reserve within the capacious bosom of the common law, an undefined authority, which being similar in its character, might also be equal in its amount, to the omnipotence of Rome."<sup>3</sup>

This absolute authority over the Church, which had been secured to Elizabeth by express statute (1 *Eliz.* c. 2. s. 26,) and which the judges determined in Cawdry's case to be inherent in the Crown, had been fully admitted both by the Church and the nation. Parliament acknowledged the Queen's right to make such reforms as she pleased "by her supreme power and authority over the Church of England;"<sup>4</sup> and the feeling which prevailed among the Churchmen of his day is explained by Hooker. "There is required an universal power, which reacheth over all, importing supreme authority of government over all courts, all judges, all causes; the operation of which power is as well to strengthen, maintain, and uphold particular jurisdictions, which haply might else be of small effect, as also to remedy that, which they are not able to help, and to redress that wherein they at any time do otherwise than they ought to

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins, iv. 188.

<sup>2</sup> Cardwell's Doc. Ann. Pref. p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Id. p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Id. p. xii.

do. This power being sometime in the Bishop of Rome, who by sinister practices had drawn it into his hands, was for just considerations by public consent annexed unto the King's royal seat and crown."<sup>5</sup> And, therefore, Hooker felt himself compelled to deny that, which had been maintained by the concurrent judgment of Antiquity; that God "hath appointed" "the ministry of the Church alone to have" "principality of judgment in Church-matters;" "therefore, it may not from them be translated to the civil magistrate."<sup>6</sup>

This absolute control of the Sovereign over the Church was somewhat modified under the Stuarts. Either the wish to take more defensible ground against Rome, or the growth of juster sentiments in themselves, induced James I. and still more his son, to recognize the Church as a Divine Body, which, though incomplete without the Sovereign, yet by his concurrence gained the powers of a substantive whole. This is the principle expressed in Charles the First's Declaration<sup>7</sup> respecting the Articles, A. D. 1628; and it led to a revival of the powers of Convocation, which had been comparatively inactive during the reign of Elizabeth. This, therefore, was the period at which the Anglican theory of Church-authority was developed, and defended both against the Puritans and against Rome. Its opposition to the former is exhibited especially in the Canons of 1603; and the learning and abilities of Andrewes, Laud, Bramhall, Mason, and others, were exerted against the latter.

Now, it has been already observed, that the Anglican system of Church-authority is open to the very same objections, which were alleged against the Donatists. For what right had the Bishops of a single Province to legislate independently in matters of faith? The excuse was, that as a chemical solution will crystallize into the same shape, when poured into any vessel where its ingredients can act freely, so the clergy of each nation retained that gift of inerrancy which belonged by God's promise to the Universal Church, because the Royal Supremacy consolidated them into a whole, and thus enabled them to speak with authority. On no

<sup>5</sup> Eccles. Pol. viii. 8, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Id. viii. 8, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Cardwell's Doc. Ann. vol. ii. p. 172.

other principle could it be maintained to be a "wicked error" to affirm "that any of the Nine-and-thirty Articles" is "in any part erroneous," or for persons to "maintain, that there are within this realm other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the King's born subjects, than such as by the laws of this land are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful Churches." As the cause of Christendom, then, was vindicated against the Donatists by those internal divisions, which St. Augustin speaks of as a "judgment"<sup>8</sup> against them, so the Anglican system was overthrown by those domestic dissensions against which the lack of Catholicity rendered it helpless. For how could the British Episcopate censure the Puritans for separating from their communion, when they were separated themselves from the communion of Christendom? So that their coercive measures produced the same effect, which the Council of Carthage speaks of, as resulting from the conduct of the Donatists towards their Maximian separatists: "Where they have a divine proof, if they choose to attend to it, that they are as censurable themselves for their separation from the unity of the Church, as they complain that the Maximians are censurable for making a division from them."<sup>9</sup>

The opposition to the High-Commission Court, and its destruction by the Long Parliament, were the necessary results, therefore, of that division from the rest of Christendom, which made the attempt to enforce religious agreement unreasonable, as well as oppressive. But the Anglican system did not finally fall, till the league between the Clergy and the King was dissolved by James II. The two last Stuart Princes were conscious that a claim was made in their names, which they had no right to advance. Their exile on the Continent must have showed them the untenableness of a territorial religion; and James refused to live

<sup>8</sup> Maximianenses, divino judicio, ad eos in omnibus confundendos, et, si sapiant, corrigendos, appositi.—*Con. Crescon.* iii. 76. vid. also iv. 69.

<sup>9</sup> Monumenta Vet. xlv. Galland. v. 564. St. Augustin says, "Horrere homines, et graviter detestari, quod etiam se ipsi in multa scismata dividerunt et maxime in Africæ capite et notissimâ civitate Carthagene."—*De Bap. c. Don.* ii. 16.



in a system, in which his brother had been afraid to die. And now, therefore, it was discovered that the Supremacy, as interpreted by the Crown lawyers, was wholly different from any authority which the Crown had anciently possessed. Stillingfleet<sup>10</sup> proved the High-Commission Court, when restored by James II. to be illegal, and showed the erroneousness of Lord Coke's assertion, that the Crown had exercised the power of excommunication before the Reformation. This was virtually to overthrow the whole system of Anglican Church-discipline; for it has never had any real effect upon the nation at large, except when backed by that strong-handed associate. But a more important circumstance still was, that the dynasty which succeeded, possessed only a Parliamentary, not a hereditary title; and ruled, therefore, through such ministers, as had the confidence of Parliament. Henceforth the Supremacy of the Crown meant the Supremacy of a Parliamentary Sovereign. And Parliament consisted in part of Dissenters, to whom William of Orange and his successors looked as their most trusted supporters.

Whereas Elizabeth,<sup>11</sup> then, had been despotic, and the Stuarts Anglo-Catholic, their successors were essentially Protestant. The Tudors had required all persons to agree with themselves; the Stuarts, with their Bishops; but William of Orange was indifferent what men believed, provided they differed from the Pope. The oath of Supremacy, under Elizabeth, had affirmed that the Pope neither did, nor ought to possess, any spiritual authority in England; and, also, that the final authority in spiritual causes belonged exclusively to the Crown. The first of these statements was expunged from the oath by 1 William and Mary, 8, because it interfered with the freedom of judgment which was claimed by Dissenters for themselves. So that the Crown gave up that right of judging in spiritual matters which Henry VIII. had won from

<sup>10</sup> Stillingfleet of Eccles. Juris. c. 2, and Gibson's Codex, i. p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> When Elizabeth was asked to tolerate, she replied, "that it was not with her safety, honour, and credit, to permit diversity of opinions in a kingdom where none but she and her Council governed."—*Strype's Ann.* v. i. p. i. c. 4. p. 128.

King Charles says of the Articles, "agreed upon by the Clergy:" "from which we will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree."



the Church, and made it over solemnly to its subjects. And Private Judgment has ever since been the real system, which has prevailed in England.

Yet this statement must be taken with one important exception. For the laws, obligations, and oaths under which Churchmen live, continue precisely the same which they were, while a single system of belief was enforced upon the nation. Every one who is admitted to the Priesthood promises to "administer the discipline of Christ," "as this Church and Realm hath received the same." He subscribes to the statement that "the King's Majesty" "is the only supreme Governor" "in all spiritual things or causes." The Ecclesiastical Laws assume every baptized person, who lives within the limits of this country, to be a member of the Church. He is so dealt with by our Ecclesiastical Courts, and in return they compel the clergy to deal so with him. However notorious his schism, or gross his unbelief, the Church's courts require the minister, in whose parish he dies, to use words at his burial which imply him to have been her consistent member. Neither can this system be given up, without an abandonment of those defences which our great Divines have constructed against Rome. For they proceed upon the supposition, that there is an identity between the Church and the nation, so that the Sovereign, as being naturally the head of the one, is of necessity the head also of the other. This circumstance, as has been seen, is alleged to give the English clergy that unity which forms them into a whole, and were it withdrawn, what authority would there be for those Articles of Faith, from which the Canons affirm it to be wicked for an Englishman to dissent?

There are reasons, therefore, why the Church of England should choose to retain those engagements, which belonged to an earlier stage of her history; for otherwise she must abandon the defences which were raised for her by learned and able men, and renounce her alleged identity with the ancient Church. Yet how is it possible to make these declarations, without feeling, that if they do not assert falsehood, they at least palter with truth? For how can the Crown be alleged in any true sense to be the Spiritual Head of the nation?

Not only does it allow Roman Catholics and Dissenters to teach their several systems ; but by their admission into Parliament, they have acquired a place in the Sovereignty itself. Our gracious Queen may be only of two religions (those which are established in England and Scotland,) but of the sects which are represented in Parliament the name is legion. To assert the Sovereign, therefore, to be "Supreme Governor" "in spiritual causes," when that Sovereign is a Parliamentary Sovereign, and Parliament represents a divided nation, is to attribute an office to the Crown which it cannot really exercise, and of which it is illusory to speak.

And hence the practical system of the Church of England is one of pure private judgment. In the time of the Tudors and Stuarts the Church seemed to come before the world as a living body, because the Royal Supremacy was alive and active ; at present the Church does nothing as a body, but leaves individuals to act as they will for themselves. Different parties teach as they please, agreeing in nothing but to charge one another with error and dishonesty : while the Bishops in general seem to sit by as umpires of the fray. Those whose converse is only with books, and who live in that circle of thoughts, which is suggested by our great Divines, may imagine that the Church of England has one consistent system of teaching, and inculcates a single body of truth ; but experience dissipates the delusion, and shows such hopes to be like those of the Tartar Conqueror, who discarded morning and evening prayer, because he imagined himself to have reached the land of eternal sunshine.

The worst effect of such disappointment is, that it induces men to acquiesce in this state of things as a necessary evil ; and thus destroys their belief in the teaching office of the Church. Perceiving that the Church of England is content to assert that this function pertains to her, without discharging it, they take for granted that its exercise is neither necessary nor possible. And the minds of men gradually accommodate themselves to their position ; a new explanation is devised for every new difficulty. We have had a recent example in the Gorham Case. When it was first decided that

the validity of Baptism was to be left an open question in the Church of England, many persons expressed their conviction, that to allow an Article of Faith to be denied, was to abandon the principle of authority, and, therefore, to lose that which was essential to the vitality of the Church. But a few years have accustomed men to this, as to other evils; they observe that if the Church allows error to be taught by her ministers, she is equally willing to allow them to teach the truth; and that they are as much at liberty as before to put any interpretation, which they please, upon her Formularies. So that this celebrated decision has but given additional support to that principle of Private Judgment, which already prevailed. Indeed, we may be surprised that men were so much agitated when they found that the Church of England would allow error to be taught in respect to one of the two great sacraments; since in respect to the other it has never been alleged, that she does more than tolerate truth. For why should the doctrine of the Real Presence, and of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, be a less essential part of Catholic truth than the doctrine of Baptismal Grace? There was no reason why those who were aware that these momentous doctrines were only tolerated in the Church of England, should be greatly moved, when they found that in the case of Baptism also she did no more than tolerate the truth. The event, after all, did but disclose, rather than alter her position, by exhibiting a striking and novel instance of her system.

Now, if it be true, as was believed in early times, that the Primacy was bestowed by Our Lord upon His chief Apostle, with an especial view of enabling His Church to teach as a corporate body, such a state of things must be looked upon as the natural consequences of its denial. Why should we wonder at the uncertainty and division which prevail around us, when we have discarded that provision, which was specifically appointed for their prevention? And it is instructive to observe that exactly the same set of evils were encountered, when, the same experiment of isolation from the rest of Christendom was attempted by a single Province in ancient days. St. Augustin's language respecting the Donatists, and the manner in which they gradually became accustomed to the spec-

tacle of division, till their consciousness of the necessity of Christian unity was effaced, might be applied directly to many among ourselves. "How many, as we well know, were already wishing to be Catholics, having been aroused by the obvious call of truth, but out of respect to their friends, put off the giving offence to them from day to day! How many were held, not by truth, to which you have never trusted, but by the heavy bond of obdurate custom; so that in them was fulfilled the divine statement, 'a stubborn servant will not be corrected by words; for though he understand, he will not hearken!' How many, too, thought that the party of Donatus was the true Church, because their security made them torpid, fastidious, and tardy in recognizing Catholic truth! How many ears were stopped by the tales of slanderers, who alleged that it was some strange offering that we presented on the altar of God! How many, believing *that it did not matter to what body a man belonged, provided he were a Christian*, remained in the party of Donatus, because they had been born there, and because no one compelled them to depart thence, and to pass over to the Catholic Church!"<sup>12</sup>

So completely have the feelings, which these last words express, become predominant in England, that separation from the rest of Christendom is hardly felt to be an evil, or the absence of Church-authority admitted to be a loss. So that if the State were to release its captive, and having detained her as long as suited its purpose, were now to strip and turn her out of doors (of which there are not wanting indications,) it may be doubted whether the result would be any increased Catholicity of action or unity of doctrine. For what would take the place of State-restraint, but the vagueness of popular will? The doctrines of the Catholic Faith ought not to be left to bodies of lay-delegates, any more than to Kings and Parliaments; they were entrusted by Our Lord to the collective Episcopate; and to subject them to popular vote, is only to bring in the principle of Private Judgment on a larger scale. But the future of the Church of England,

<sup>12</sup> Epist. xciii. 17.



if she were discarded by the State, may be understood by the condition of the Church in America, which only reflects the contests, which rage among ourselves, without that claim to Nationality, on which the authority of the English Bishops has professedly been grounded.

And yet it may be said, that to return to the ancient system of Catholic Unity is impossible; that nations do not thus retrace their steps, nor the waves of time flow backward. This may be true. Prophecy does not tell us that time will of necessity give the ascendancy to truth: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." But the whole objective system of Christianity hangs together, and it may be doubted whether the revolt of the human mind is not as fatal to each particular doctrine, as to the unity of the whole. There are some doctrines, no doubt, which are so remote from practice, or so accordant with the inclinations of a civilized age, that they are more readily accepted than denied. And customs may be allowed to retain their place out of deference to ancient habit, when their significance is lost. For what does it cost men to practise Baptism, if it be affirmed to be only a harmless custom, or to recognize Episcopacy, if it does not impose restraints upon their faith, or to commemorate the death of the world's great benefactor by a pious usage? The difficulty is when these things become realities, which demand belief, and affect men's lives. And then it will be found that Baptismal Regeneration, and the Real Presence, and the Authority of the Episcopate, are as hard to maintain as St. Peter's Primacy; and that the first are not practically believed by any large body of men, by whom the last is denied. For these doctrines cannot be maintained, unless we recognize the authority of Antiquity; and the ancient Fathers teach no doctrine of the Church more clearly than the pre-eminence of the chief Apostle.

After all, however, men may say, the authority of Scripture will remain, and what harm is there in falling back upon Private Judgment, so long as we limit ourselves to the Sacred Text? But it has been shown in the beginning of this volume, that with the Church's authority, the authority

of Holy Scripture must fall also. Individuals may be content to take it as their guide, without inquiring into its pretensions, but it cannot permanently influence nations, unless it retains an authoritative claim to their respect. So that it is idle to set up Holy Scripture against the Church, when it is only through the Church's judgment that we are assured of its authority. The Christian system came forth originally as a living whole, in which teaching and action were indissolubly united; and it is impossible to break up the unity of the *Body*, without abandoning the oneness of the faith.

And now, then, to sum up the results, at which we have arrived. It has been shown, by the testimony of those who lived before us, that Our Lord not only taught doctrines, but founded a Church. To this Church He was pleased to commit the especial function of interpreting that system, which He delivered to mankind. He qualified it for such an office, by rendering it the habitation of that Divine Spirit, which had dwelt without measure in the temple of His own Humanity, and was pleased to take up Its perpetual abode in His Body Mystical, the Church. Such is the statement of those who have delivered to us an account of Our Lord's nature and actions; and unless this capacity of judgment had been possessed by the Church, we could have no evidence of the inspiration of that Sacred Volume, which contains the records of our faith. For it was the Church's judgment which stamped it with authority; and in its turn it confirms that which Antiquity had previously witnessed respecting the authority of the Church. The Church's authority, then, depends on that presence of the Spirit, which gives it life. This authority had resided first in its completeness in the Person of Our Lord, when He was manifest in the Flesh. He was pleased to bestow it in a plenary manner on the College of His Apostles. From them it has descended to their successors, the Bishops throughout the world. But to preserve the unity of this wide-spread commission, Our Lord was pleased to give an especial promise to one of His Apostles, and to bestow upon him a name and office derived from Himself. And as the Episcopal College at large succeeded to the Apostles, so was there one Bishop, whom the

Universal Church believed from the first to be the successor of St. Peter. Hence was he spoken of in ancient times, as discharging that function among the rulers of the Church-Catholic, which was discharged among his brethren by the chief Apostle. The successor of St. Peter is declared by those General Councils, which are admitted by all Catholics, to be the representative of him, who was the bond of unity, and Rock of the Church. And hence, as the circle of Christendom grew wider, and its unity could not be maintained without a stronger principle of centralization, it was through this influence that the oneness of the Catholic Body was perpetuated; and the Primacy of St. Peter ripened into the Supremacy of the Pope.

But now comes a change. There arises a powerful monarch in a remote land, who resolves to separate the Church of his nation from the unity of Christendom. He effects his purpose by force or fraud, and bids it recognize a new principle of unity in himself. He passes to his account, and his children rule after him. But this new principle of unity is found in time to be insufficient. No sooner is the grasp of the civil ruler relaxed, than a host of parties divide the land. The very thought of unity, and hope of concord, is gradually lost. The national Church is surrounded by sects, and torn by dissensions. *Intra muros peccatur et extra*. And can it be doubted what advice would be given to its children by that great Saint, who looked forth upon a somewhat similar spectacle in his native land; and whose life was expended in winning back his brethren one by one to the unity of Christendom? He did not think that the national unity of Africa was any pledge of safety to the Donatists; or that the number and succession of their Bishops entitled them to respect. "Come, brethren, if you wish to be inserted in the vine; for we grieve, when we see you lie thus cut off from it. Number the Bishops from the very seat of Peter, and in that list of Fathers see what has been the succession; this is the rock, against which the proud gates of Hell do not prevail." <sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Psalm. c. Don. S. Aug. ix. 7.







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